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Bushwalking...

\$4.95* Autumn (April May June) 1989, issue 32



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Cover Climbing the Ironbound Range, with Louisa Bay in the background, South Coast Track, Tasmania. Photo Chris Baxter. Contents Coming up for air, Imperal Cave, Jenolan, New South Wales. Photo Alan Warild. *Maximum recommended retail price only

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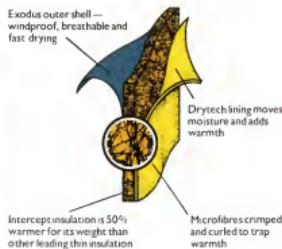
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Whither Tasmania?

'The Holiday Island' to go the way of 'the Apple Island'?

▲ EAGER FOR A SLOGAN WITH WHICH TO promote the smallest Australian State, Tasmania's marketing experts came up with 'the Apple Island'. This did the job for years. But when the bottom fell out of the Tasmanian orchard industry after the UK joined the European Economic Community and the Tasmanian Government subsidized the large-scale clearing of the State's orchards, the description was no longer appropriate. Following some head-scratching, 'the Holiday Island' was born—the perfect choice for a State renowned for natural beauty and increasingly anxious to attract growing numbers of jaded tourists from the giant mainland cities. It seems, however, that the days of even this new slogan may be numbered; ironically, because of the government's policy of encouraging the wholesale felling of trees. This time not planted by man, but comprising Tasmania's once-vast native forests.

Few would dispute that Tasmania has the best wild forest, mountain and coastal walking in Australia, and Tasmania's wild rivers are world-famous for rafting and canoeing. Since the War, increasing numbers of bushwalkers and others who love wild places have regarded an annual summer pilgrimage to Tasmania as a must. There is simply nothing like it anywhere else. I have joined the 'pilgrims' many times over the last 25 years, returning over and again to the unique South-west and other parts of the island. Last summer, I was fortunate to spend over a month there, rockclimbing on the Freycinet Peninsula and Mt Geryon, and walking the South Coast Track. I'd heard, of course, of the logging at Farmhouse Creek. I even knew, I thought, how near it is to the most spectacular Australian summit, Federation Peak. But nothing had prepared me for the reality. Flying to Melaleuca Inlet on the south coast, I was horrified by what I saw: clear-felling and a network of roads on the flanks of Mt Picton, within sight of Federation Peak and in the very heart of the South-west.

I was amazed at the destruction left by the aftermath of logging on the southern slopes of the Ben Lomond plateau, below Stacks Bluff. The area looks like something out of *Deliverance*. Years after the action moved on to other pastures, leaving a tiny, ugly and impoverished ghost town clinging to the wreckage of the hillside, the forest is decimated and riddled with old logging tracks, and strewn with the detritus of logging and mining. Stacks Bluff is no argument, economic or aesthetic, for logging Tasmania's remaining forests.

It would be bad enough if it ended there, but of course it doesn't—the Huon valley, Lemontyne, Douglas-Apsley, the Central Highlands—the lamentable litany of logging goes on, as even a superficial scan of *Wild* Information pages over the years will attest. The recent announcement by the Tasmanian

Government of plans for new wood-pulp mills, particularly the monster proposed for Wesley Vale (see page 13), is a tragedy. If it wasn't clear before, it now should be: logging, whether for woodchips or timber, is by far the greatest environmental threat to Tasmania, indeed Australia.

Important as the Franklin River campaign was, particularly as a precedent, far more is now at stake in the fight for the forests. The area remaining under forest, particularly in Tasmania, is too small, and the trees too old, for the issue to be one of anything but dire importance. Yet rather than taking drastic steps to ensure the preservation of what little remains, the Tasmanian Government is actively encouraging escalation of the destruction.

Despite the rhetoric about 'sustainable yield', 'employment opportunities', 'selective felling', 'contribution to Australia's balance of payments' and the like, the proverbial 'bottom line' is short-term gain for a few and long-term destruction affecting many. This is particularly the case with woodchipping. Australian industry has seldom enjoyed a reputation for its willingness to take risks, to invest heavily in research and development or even capital equipment, or to forego short-term profits for long-term growth. This is particularly true of the paper industry, which appears to spend more energy on public relations. Tasmania's remaining ancient forests are being pillaged to allow Japanese paper mills to meet our demand for quality paper, but for only a few more years. *Then we'll have to seriously consider recycling paper and retraining the workforce.*

Like many things that history has found to be completely untenable, this absurdly short-sighted and self-destructive attitude is blessed with the stamp of official approval.

Apart from the obvious aesthetic and spiritual considerations, the reasons which demand an immediate halt to Tasmanian logging of native forests are as varied as they are compelling. On economic grounds alone it is indefensible. Unemployment for those involved is a certainty. Not only will the source of raw material dry up in only a few years, but the resultant destruction will severely impede plans to promote 'the Holiday Island'. It's not a case of 'if the timber runs out but when'. And ancient forests don't regenerate overnight.

Damage to irreplaceable flora and fauna, caused by the destruction of their habitat, is another indisputable consequence of logging. Mammals, birds, reptiles, insects and plant communities are all affected. The list of species which have become extinct since European settlement of Tasmania is long and growing faster than ever.

A few years ago, the phrase 'greenhouse effect' was not in the vocabulary of even the most extreme environmental activist. Today, whilst the matter is yet to be properly



Above: Chris pauses in front of Lion Rock near the end of his walk of Tasmania's South Coast Track last summer.

understood, there can be few media outlets in the world which have not reported the likely connection between possible serious changes in the Earth's climatic patterns and the destruction of forests. Scientists state that there is so much more we should learn from our native forests before we rush ahead and clear them. Certainly, the benefits offered don't justify the costs, present and future. (And if experience elsewhere in Australia is an indication, forest cover moves in only one direction, 'sustainable yield' and 'responsible forest management' notwithstanding.)

Small, precious, beautiful and unique, Tasmania's forests are of immense intrinsic value for this and untold future generations. They are also valuable as a test case for the future of Australian forests generally. ▲

Chris Baxter

Chris Baxter
Managing Editor

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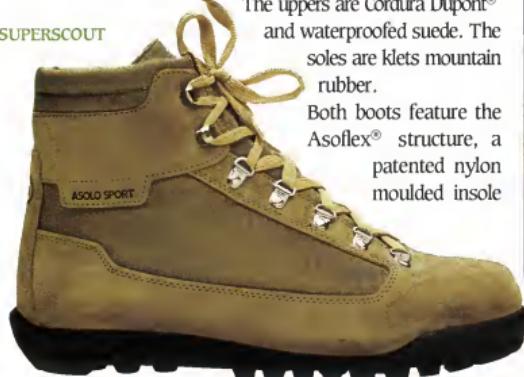
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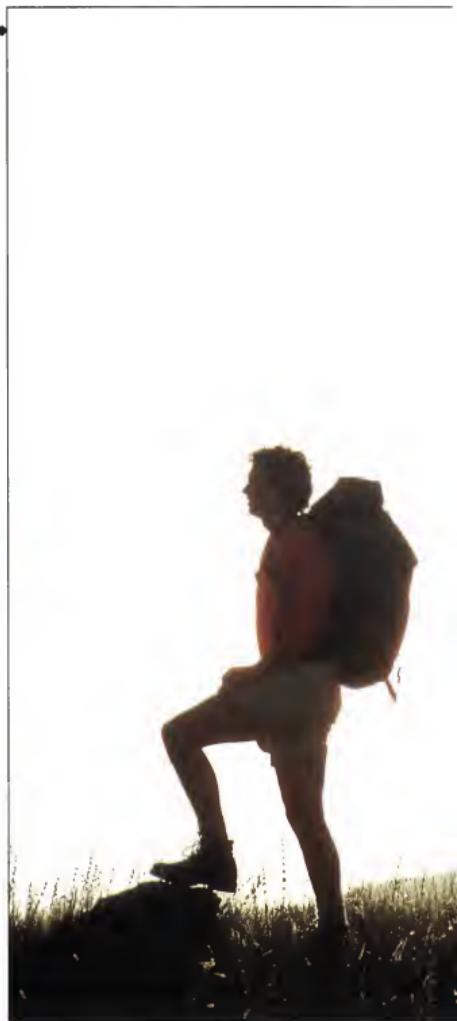
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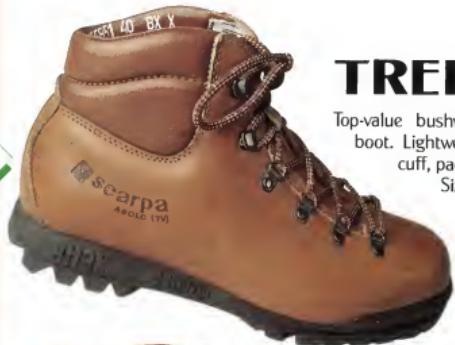
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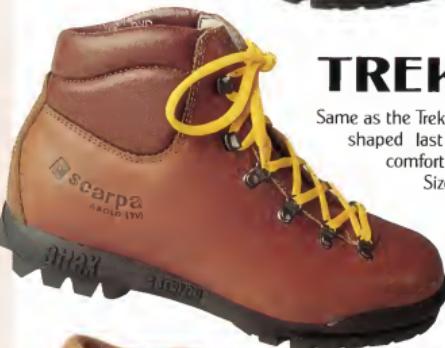
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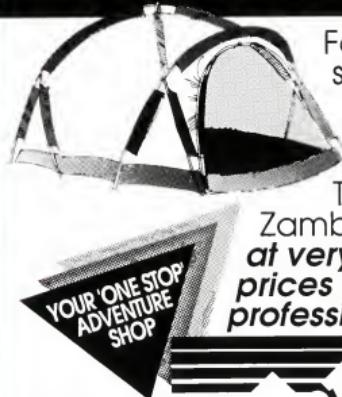
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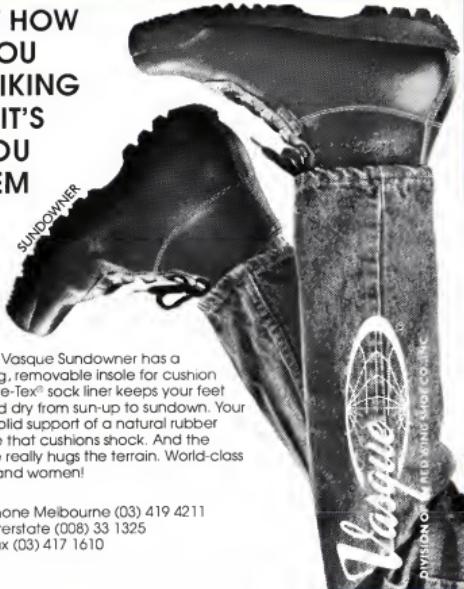
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GREAT ESCAPE

TRAVEL BAG 1

Woodchipping Tasmania

'\$1 billion pulp mill' gets go-ahead

Pulped. Last October, the Tasmanian Government, together with the Australian and Canadian companies involved, announced the proposed establishment of a giant woodchip mill at Wesley Vale, near Devonport on Tasmania's north-west coast. The mill is expected to consume two million tonnes of timber a year. The Australian Conservation Foundation and the Wilderness Society reported that the announcement was made, with the support of the Australian and Tasmanian Governments, ten days before the release of the applicants' environmental impact statement. The ACF reports that the statement has been condemned by the scientific community, local residents and conservationists. Indeed, many traditional supporters of the Tasmanian Government, including loggers and farmers, have strongly opposed its handling of the issue. In order to supply the proposed mill with sufficient pulpwood, it seems likely that quotas to existing mills would be cut, with an impact on employment. Another factor is the proposal to discharge 60 million litres of effluent a day into the Bass Strait, an issue of concern to local fishermen, as well as conservationists. Residents have opposed the project on account of anticipated air pollution from the mill's prospective 100 metre high chimneys.

Meanwhile, a plan by a Tasmanian company to establish a woodchip export mill on the Huon River in southern Tasmania has also brought widespread opposition. The Wilderness Society reports that the mill will consume 640,000 tonnes of timber a year.

The society claims that the two proposed mills have forced the Tasmanian Forestry Commission to plan for an increase in the forest cut of 20%, or 790,000 tonnes a year, larger than the whole of the Eden, New South Wales, woodchip operation.

An article published in the *Australian* newspaper in January points out that Australia's forest resources have been poorly managed. It tells how in 1985-6, Australia imported \$1.09 billion more in forest products than it exported. The main cause is that we export 69% of our timber as woodchips, the least valuable form of timber. Most of this is sent to Japan and used to manufacture high-quality paper, which we then import. Exported woodchips earn only about \$68 a tonne. Royalties paid to governments by logging companies range from \$8 to \$11 a tonne. Australia exports approximately 5 million tonnes of woodchips a year, including 3 million tonnes from Tasmania.

The December 1988 issue of *Wilderness News* reports that the 18 October issue of the *Sydney Morning Herald* newspaper weighed 1,507 kilograms, claimed by the newspaper to be a record. A Wilderness Society member



Above: 'responsible forest management', Farmhouse Creek, South-west Tasmania. Chns Baxter

estimated that the paper required for this issue would have consumed a minimum of 7,911 medium-sized trees.

Australia Covered. A \$600 million mapping programme of the entire Australian continent was completed in 1988 after 23 years' work. For the first time, Australia is covered by more than 3,000 compilations and maps. The Government has approved a \$6 million annual revision programme to keep the coverage up to date. Completed by the Australian Surveying and Land Information Group (AUSLIG), a useful sheet showing the location of every map and compilation has also been published. For further information contact AUSLIG, PO Box 2, Belconnen, ACT 2616.

Trailing Off. Touted as 'the world's longest wilderness trail', the recently opened Bicentennial National Trail follows the Great Dividing Range from Healesville, Victoria, to far north Queensland. Designed primarily for horse-riding, it was completed with assistance from the Australian Bicentennial Authority.

Backfire. The Melbourne newspaper, *The Age*, tells how an internationally acclaimed US forester, Dr Carl Jordan, retained by the Queensland Government to assess the effects of logging on north Queensland rain forests, reported: 'To continue logging in the minuscule Australian rain forest, simply to support a handful of workers operating

hopelessly outdated mills is really the ultimate in parochialism.'

The Queensland rain forest is so rich in species, natural beauty and conservation values, it would be irresponsible of Australia not to promote World Heritage listing with complete elimination of logging.'

Subsequently, a report appeared in the Press quoting the Queensland Opposition as saying that leaked Cabinet documents showed that the Queensland Government was spending \$600,000 on an advertising campaign against World Heritage listing.

NSW Park News. In December, the New South Wales Government announced that it had purchased 714 hectares of rain forest and coastal land for addition to north coast National Parks and reserves. In five small parcels, most of the land was purchased from a local sawmiller.

In October a draft plan of management for New England National Park was released. The park is a World Heritage Area and covers almost 30,000 hectares.

Concerned with declining koala numbers in NSW, the NSW Government has announced it is considering a plan to establish new breeding colonies of disease-free koalas in secret, remote and heavily protected parts of the State.

Conservationists are concerned that Scots broom, a native of Scotland, will soon cover much of Barrington Tops National Park. As a consequence of the spread of the plant in the region, some parts are almost inaccessible to kangaroos and other large animals. To date,

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attempts to control Scots broom in the area have had little effect and have damaged native flora. It is understood that the plant is also found, on a smaller scale, in Kosciusko National Park.

The NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service is to be given new powers over beaches along a ten kilometre stretch of the NSW north coast including Shelley Beach. Previously, NP&WS Rangers could not stop four-wheel-drives on beaches because the intertidal zone was controlled by the Lands Department. However, the Lands Department has agreed to hand over control of this zone on a ten kilometre stretch of coast. The government says that the arrangement is a test case and may be extended to other beaches in NSW National Parks. People caught taking four-wheel-drive vehicles on prohibited beaches face fines of up to \$500.

Yengo National Park, near Newcastle, has been in the news due to both logging and mining threats to the area. On 3 March 1988 the then Mineral Resources Minister, Ken Gabb, signed a licence renewal for gas exploration in the Yengo National Park area just eight days before the same (Labor) government proclaimed a National Park. The present (Liberal) government has pledged to prevent mining in any NSW National Park and to strongly discourage exploration in Yengo National Park.

Meanwhile, the Wilderness Society has heavily criticized the NSW Government for allowing logging companies to extend the logging time in Yengo National Park (which commenced in the area before the park was proclaimed) 'to enable them to clean-up the areas worked'. Conservationists are concerned that logging may go ahead in untouched areas of the park, which is popular with local bushwalkers, during the extension.

In November, the NSW Minister for the Environment, Tim Moore, re-opened three popular Blue Mountains walking tracks and launched a series of new walking track leaflets—for the Wentworth Falls, Leura and Katoomba areas.

The following month, Mr Moore announced the gazetting of the 70,000 hectare Nombinnin Nature Reserve, north of Griffith in mallee country.

The NSW Government has reaffirmed its commitment to protect the State's three World Heritage Areas and announced that a fourth is also being considered for listing—the alpine park regions of NSW, Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory.

Canyon Floods. Wet weather in the Sydney area over the Christmas-New Year period caused rapid rises in water levels in northern Blue Mountains canyons. National Parks & Wildlife Service Rangers expressed concern at the foolhardiness of people venturing into canyons during heavy rain and several had to be rescued from Wollangambe Canyon after the New Year week-end.

One party was forced to wait on the northern side of the Wollangambe River, north of Mt Wilson, while flood waters receded. They had been on an exploratory trip deep in the Wollangambe Wilderness when forced by heavy rain to return. They crossed one canyon by jumping the narrow chasm 20 metres

above the cascading torrent, then swam across Yarramun Creek, before being thwarted by the Wollangambe. The waters receded quickly and they were able to escape by way of an awkward log traverse late in the evening.

Another group spent a cold night near the exit to Claustal Canyon, with one member suffering from mild hypothermia. They exited to find an unimpressed Ranger who had earlier warned them not to enter the canyon.

Intending canyoneers should refer to the safety directions in David Noble's 'Blue Mountains Canyons Guide' (Wild no 28). A Devonshire tea at Mt Wilson might be the safest option if thunderstorms or heavy rain are forecast.

Roger Lembit



Above: waterfall on Diamond Creek, Deua Wilderness, New South Wales. Roger Lembit. Right: Colo River from Mailes Ridge, NSW. Andrew Cox.

Diamond Creek to be Shattered? The Forestry Commission of NSW is reportedly planning to take advantage of a favourable government by bringing forward the logging of the upper Diamond Creek catchment, next to Deua National Park. The commission originally planned to log the area in 1997 but has now placed it on the logging agenda for this year.

Diamond Creek features a series of spectacular waterfalls, rain forest and some magnificent mountain grey gums. It is one of the most popular walking areas in the north-eastern corner of the Deua Wilderness. (See Wild no 30.)

An environmental assessment report called on the commission to discuss logging proposals with the National Parks & Wildlife Service. The commission apparently considers that a brief letter advising the service of road-making proposals amounts to negotiation. The Minister for the Environment, Tim Moore, has written to the Forests Minister, suggesting that the operations may cause

public controversy, and requesting an urgent meeting to discuss the commission's proposals.

RL

New Route to the Colo. NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service officers have marked a new route to the Colo River. This route does not



appear to be known well by walkers and could soon become overgrown. The track follows Mailes Ridge and descends to the Colo River near Mercoo Trig. On the river bank at the foot of the track is an excellent camping area. Not quite up to the standard of a formed track, the route is cleared and well marked with posts. To reach the start of the route turn off the Bell Road and proceed to Mountain Lagoon. From there, follow the steep fire track that heads towards Condor Trig (a four-wheel-drive track) and follow the lower branch that heads towards Mailes Ridge, as shown on the Mt Lagoon 1 : 25,000 Central Mapping Authority of NSW map.

The route is very scenic, featuring fine views of the Colo River.

David Noble

Open Roads. The NSW Minister for the Environment, Tim Moore, has come up with a novel way to prevent damage to unsealed roads by four-wheel-drive vehicles. Pressure by the 'drive-anywhere' lobby to reopen the severely eroded Shelley Beach Track in Yuraygir National Park, northern NSW, has resulted in the minister directing that the track be sealed. This decision overturns one by the former minister and now leader of the opposition, Bob Carr, to close the track and provide walking access only.

RL

No Boyd Power Line. The NSW Government has abandoned plans to re-route a transmission line through the Kanangra-Boyd National Park after realizing it would be too expensive. (See Wild no 30, page 17.) The line had been originally approved by the previous government to run west of Oberon and well away from the park, but complaints from local graziers led to a review of the route by the present government.

The graziers' proposals suggested the line run across the upper Kowmung River near Morong Falls and then through the western side of the park towards Jenolan Caves. This route would have cost several million dollars more and required the preparation of a new

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environmental impact statement for the line, which would undoubtedly have been challenged by conservation groups in court.

The Kowmung is still under threat from proposals to raise the storage height of Warragamba Dam.

RL

Bush Fires. About half of Royal National Park, near Sydney, was burnt by bushfire last summer, much of it due to a back-burn that spread further than authorities anticipated. A fire which destroyed a greater area but received less publicity occurred near Putty on the eastern side of the Wollomi National Park. Both fires are believed to have been deliberately started.

DN

Duck for Cover. Whilst rejecting calls from animal welfare groups for a ban on duck shooting, the NSW Government has approved changes to the 1989 duck hunting season, which are designed to protect endangered ducks and other birds. Licence fees are to be doubled over two years, the extra revenue to fund a 'vigorous law enforcement campaign' during the hunting season and, later, an education programme for shooters.

New Cave. Cavers have discovered a vast flooded cave system near Wellington in central NSW. The new system, connected to caves discovered last century, may be the most extensive in Australia and is rich in fossils.

Kosciusko Development. A ministerial committee of the NSW Government is considering the possibility of changing regulations to allow more development in the Mt Kosciusko region. A report in the *Australian* newspaper says that developers were given a new lease of life when the NSW Premier, Nick Greiner, visited the area in 1988 to open the \$150 million Skitube. He indicated then that controls in the area might be too restrictive for development. In response, a group of local businessmen and councillors formed the Snowy Development Board and have released a report recommending the provision of up to 10,000 more beds in the region. Tourism developments totalling more than \$500 million are being considered. Meanwhile, the NSW Government has given the go-ahead for the construction of 15 'cabins' above the snow line in the Merit's Park area of Thredbo village. It has also commenced work on the final section of the elevated steel-mesh summit walkway in the Kosciusko National Park. The five kilometre section will cost about \$700,000 and stretch from Top Station on the Crackenback Range, above Thredbo village, to Rawsons Pass at the base of Mt Kosciusko.

Getting Physical. In September, 1988, Peter Treseder and Tony Powell became the first people to walk the Katoomba-to-Mittagong Bicentennial Trail, NSW. The 140 kilometre walk, which traverses the Blue Mountains, was completed in three days.

As we go to press, we have announcements of three NSW events, about which we hope to have further details in time for the next issue.

First is a 46 kilometre run from Katoomba to Jenolan Caves through the Kanangra-Boyd National Park by the Six Foot Track, to be held on 18 March.

The ACT Rogaining Championships and the Silva Mountain Marathon are to be held at Kiandra on 31 March and 1 April.

Finally, the Paddy Pallin Rogaine (formerly the Paddy Pallin Orienteering Contest) is on 19 June. Held annually since 1964, for the first 17 years the event took place in the Blue Mountains. This year it is to be held in the NSW Southern Highlands. Lengthened to six hours in 1988, the event now includes sections for women, Scouts and novices. However, the main interest will focus on whether 'the boys from Newcastle', Terry Farrell and Arthur Kingsland, can make it three in a row and visit all the check-points with time to spare, as they have done for the last two years. Further information: telephone Warwick Marsden on (02) 399 7814.

Winter Traverse. Leaving Walhalla, Victoria, on 24 August, Martin Parry arrived at Kiandra, New South Wales, 29 days later to complete what is thought to be one of the first winter traverses of the Alpine Walking Track between those towns. Unaccompanied for much of the 480 kilometre journey, he had four food dumps.

Cheap Thrills? In November, the Victorian Tourism Commission, Department of Conservation, Forests & Lands, and Department of Sport and Recreation conducted a two-day adventure tourism conference. Sessions included 'Victoria's Natural Environment as a Base for the Adventure Tourism Industry' (by two senior members of the National Parks & Wildlife Service), 'Assessing Development Opportunities in Adventure Tourism', 'International Wholesaling' and 'The Adventure Tourism Industry'.

Grampians for Sale. Stawell Shire Council is considering a plan for a \$15–20 million tourist resort, including 'five-star' accommodation, at Halls Gap, which is surrounded by Victoria's Grampians National Park. The proposal was first made in 1984 but was rejected by the council after public opposition. The entrepreneur concerned claims that the proposal now has the support of the relevant State authorities. The resort is planned for 50–60 hectares of privately owned land on the Halls Gap-Dunkeld Road, about three kilometres south of Halls Gap, the site of Le Chateau Hotel, which was burnt down in 1969. The *Stawell Times-News* reports that the submission is the biggest the council's planning committee has been asked to examine.

In October, it was announced that the budget allocation for the Horsham region under the Department of Conservation, Forests & Lands (which includes the Grampians and Mt Arapiles) was over \$5.2 million for 1988–9, including more than \$1.3 million spent on direct 'management' of the Grampians.

In a further announcement, the department reported that in the first three weeks since it was opened on 18 September, the National Parks Visitor Centre in the previously beautiful

Fyans Creek valley, near Halls Gap, attracted 16,000–17,000 visitors.

In December, the Grampians Promotion Committee estimated that at least \$3.5 million had been spent on developing tourist facilities in the Grampians in 1988.

The 'Future' of the Victorian Alps. Long thought of as a ski touring area, Mt Stirling is under threat following a proposal by the Alpine Resorts Commission to develop a ski resort, comprising an alpine village and 12 ski tows on the mountain. The proposal also recommends a gondola to link Mt Stirling and Mt Buller, and extensive car-parking facilities. The plan has been vigorously attacked by conservationists and cross country skiers. A letter from David Pollock, published in the *Age* newspaper suggested: 'The Alpine Resorts Commission is demonstrating a reckless disregard for the environment in its proposal for ski resort expansion.'

'Alpine resorts are causing major damage to Victoria's limited alpine areas. Resorts such as Falls Creek are littered with decades of signs and equipment. Exotic and noxious weeds are flourishing in the resorts, and the alpine catchments are being polluted with their sewage, including an overflow at Dinner Plain...'

'The habitat of endangered flora and fauna is disappearing under expanding ski slopes and the eyesore of lift towers and hideous pseudo-European chalets are visible throughout much of the Alps.'

'With the news that climatic warming is likely to eliminate most skiing in 40–50 years... one might expect the resorts to clean up their act...'

'But... the Alpine Resorts Commission (is) busily planning to turn Mt Stirling into a weed-infested, mechanized copy of Mt Buller...'

As we go to press, a report is to hand of a serious landslide at nearby Mt Hotham ski resort which appears to have been the result of attempts to clear snow gums to extend ski runs.

Victoria's Department of Conservation, Forests & Lands is considering a proposal to log around Mt Murray, on the Great Dividing Range west of Mt Hotham, which is traversed by the Alpine Walking Track. (See photos on page 32 and 33 of *Wild* no 31.) If the proposal goes ahead it will also involve major road-building activity in the area. A likely possibility would be the 'upgrading' of part of the Twins four-wheel-drive track to a major two-wheel-drive road, along the Alpine Walking Track. (See Editorial in *Wild* no 26.) The Federation of Victorian Walking Clubs reports that the department (in a rare exposé of the 'scientific method' commonly adopted in arriving at its decisions) assessed the level of recreational walking in the area to be low, based on their finding only a limited number of campsite sites! With ironic understatement, the federation concluded: 'They obviously need education in the principles of minimum impact bushwalking.'

For some time, conservationists and bushwalkers have been calling on the Department of Conservation, Forests & Lands, which is responsible for the administration of the area, to ban commercial horse-riding tours from the Alps, including the

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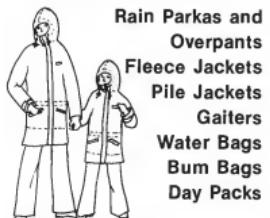
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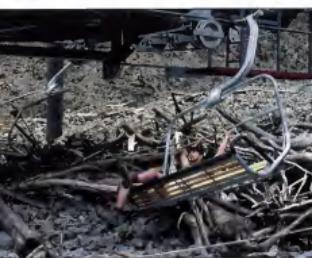


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Above. 'Come to Mt Hotham, Victoria, for a true wilderness experience': scenes of the recent landslide. Australian Conservation Foundation

Mt Howitt-Bluff region of north-east Victoria, one of the State's best bushwalking venues, on account of erosion caused by horses' hooves. Ruts of up to half a metre deep have recently appeared due to horse-riding on the Bluff. The department announced a ban but, according to a Press report, after an approach from a tour operator (who argued of his organization's contribution to Australia's international balance of payments through its US customers), a department spokesman was quoted as saying that the ban did not apply to the two main operators already in the field but only to new ones. A letter subsequently published questioned the contribution to Australia's economy claimed by the operator, since according to a recent government return prepared by the organization it declared a 1987 operating profit of only \$7,647.

A report in the Press indicates that East Gippsland loggers have prepared for 'bush warfare' with hard-line conservationists who, they believe, have sabotaged their activities. Loggers claim one of them was forced out of business by sabotage and that they fear for their lives, as well as their livelihoods. A logger is quoted as saying that he would kill anyone he caught tampering with his bulldozer.

Walking Tasmania. In a major effort to educate the public as to the value of Tasmanian forests and other wild places, the

Wilderness Society organized 'The Great Tasmanian Forest Walk', a five-week expedition from Wesley Vale, in the north, to South Cape Bay on the south coast. The walk, which commenced on 1 January, was unusual in that it was designed for large-scale public involvement. Its progress was well reported in the Tasmanian Press, and elsewhere, and people were encouraged to join the walk for as short (or as long) a section as they liked, in order to encourage an Australia-wide gathering of people of all ages and levels of experience in the bush.

Last summer there was a major track upgrading programme in Tasmania's National Parks, particularly on the Overland Track, the South Coast Track and the Frenchmans Cap Track. On each of these, major sections have been duck-boarded. On the South Coast Track, for example, there has been extensive benching and duck-boarding between Louisa Creek and Louisa River and on the west side of the Ironbound Range. Large numbers of walkers are now using this route and it appears that the authorities are grooming and marketing it as a 'consumer track' like the Overland Track. Navigational skills required for the walk are almost nil, there are at least three huts or shelters on the way, many campsites have toilets, and last summer a 'roving Ranger' (Range Rover?) patrolled the track.

Local enthusiasts, Liz Coombe and Hilary Edwards, through their Wandering Walks, have started leading day walks on Mt Wellington designed to appeal to tourists and others, of all ages, with little or no experience of the bush. (See Track Notes.)

Fighting for the Flinders. A proposal by the South Australian Government for a \$50 million resort development in the Flinders Ranges National Park near spectacular Wilpena Pound has raised a storm of protest. At present, 27,000 people a year stay in accommodation at the entrance to Wilpena Pound. The accommodation would have the potential to accommodate 64,000 within five years. A Save the Flinders Ranges Campaign has been organized and has attracted an unusually strong and varied following in South Australia.

Cave In. Late in 1988 there were Press reports of a major cave collapse in Pannikin Plain Cave, Western Australia, which trapped a number of cavers who had to be dug out by police. Dirk Stoffels, one of the cavers trapped by a huge rockfall following extremely heavy rain, reports that on the second last day of the trip there were 15 cavers in the cave and 3 on the surface when the fall occurred. Those in the cave spent the night there, maintaining radio contact with the cavers on the surface. Next day, they were able to extricate themselves uninjured before the arrival of police.

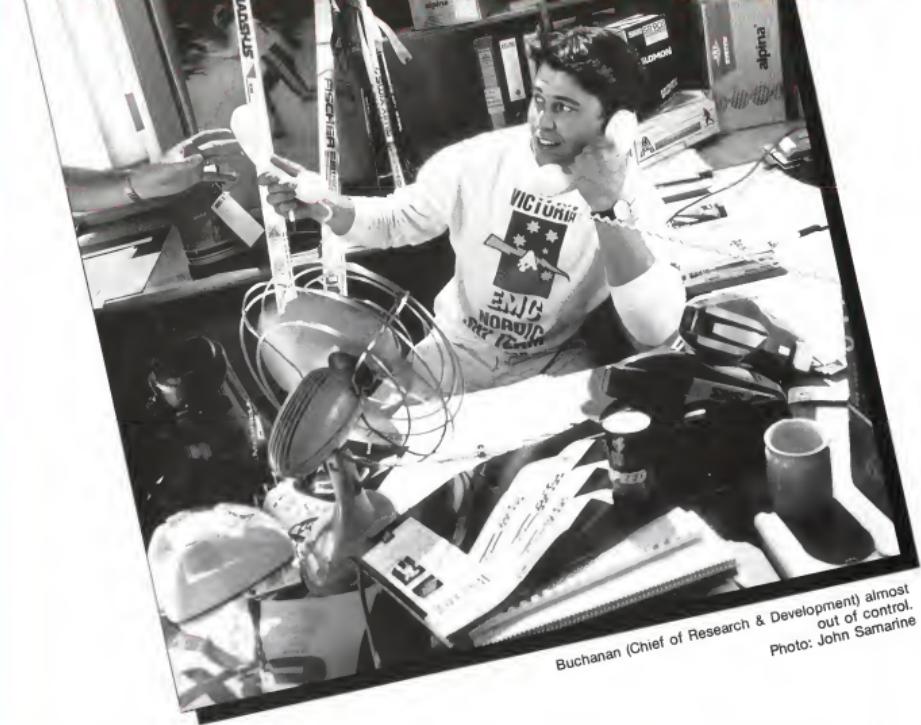
Antarctica. In December, Australians Greg Mortimer, Mike McDowell, and New Zealand resident, Colin Monteath, made a lightning trip to climb the highest peak in Antarctica, Mt Vinson (5,139 metres). Mortimer, a veteran of the first Australian ascent of Mt Everest and of the first ascent of Antarctica's Mt Minto, learned of the trip only 56 hours before he left Australia and raised \$8,000 in sponsorship in 48 hours. He left Sydney on 2 December and reached the summit eight days later after three days' climbing. Following the climb, the first by Australians, the team made the first ascent of the East Ridge of nearby Mt Shinn. (Mortimer reports many spectacular and unclimbed 2,500-metre faces in the region.) The plane which was to fly the team from the area landed short of the runway, became embedded in a snow-bank and had to be dug out before they could leave.

As we go to press, a commercially led ski expedition is expected to have reached the South Pole after a 1,200 kilometre trip across the frozen continent. The two female members will be the first women to ski to the pole, where the team is to be met by an aircraft. The organizers, a Canadian operation, claim that their route has never before been attempted and that the only previous ski expeditions to the pole were those led by Roald Amundsen (1910-11), Robert Scott (1910-11), and Robert Swan (1985-86).

Plight of the Penan. Conservationists around the world, including Australian groups such as the Australian Conservation Foundation and the Wilderness Society, have become increasingly active in their opposition to the effects of large-scale logging in Sarawak which is devastating the rain forest environment and driving out the native Penan population. The Penan have been described as the last nomadic cultural group in South-east Asia. The Malaysian Government has shown a marked reluctance to act against the loggers many of whom, it is claimed, have close ties with politicians and senior public servants. A local official was quoted in the Australian Press as saying that despite Sarawak rain forest being felled at the rate of seven and a half square kilometres a day, the logging could be sustained for 20 years and 'is not going to spoil Sarawak'.

Himalayan News. Australian, Ydeet Winter-Irving, was a member of a 1988 international expedition which Telemarked from the summit of Kedarnath Dome (6,850 metres) in the Garhwal Himalayas. This, and

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Buchanan (Chief of Research & Development) almost out of control.
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Wild Information

a Telemark descent of Tibet's Mustagh Ata (7,560 metres), were practice runs for expedition member Giorgio Daidola (Italy), and Didier Givols (France), who made the first Telemark descent of an 8,000 metre peak when they skied from the summit of Tibet's Shishapangma (8,013 metres) to Advanced Base Camp.

In *Wild* no 30, it was reported that Chris Currie reached 8,600 metres in his attempt on Mt Everest. He has advised that he reached 8,700 metres.

New Zealand's High Country Expeditions is organizing adventurous commercial mountaineering expeditions, including to Changtse (7,553 metres) in Tibet. Australia's Rockclimbing School is organizing commercial trips to Changtse, and to an 8,000 metre peak, Broad Peak, in Pakistan.

Ambitious New Zealand climber, Lydia Brady (see interview in *Rock* 1986), was in the news recently following an unauthorized, solo attempt of the original, South Col, route on Mt Everest after the failure of a 1988 New Zealand expedition, which included Brady, on a harder route on the mountain. Whilst Brady used camps and equipment belonging to other teams on the route, she apparently climbed without artificial oxygen. There has been dispute in the climbing Press as to whether she reached the summit. She certainly got close, as she was seen near the South Summit by Spanish climbers.

UK Himalayan climber, Doug Scott, is to visit Australia for a lecture tour in May.

Up the Creek? An international expedition planning to canoe the Nile from its headwaters in Uganda, through Sudan and Egypt to the Mediterranean is currently advertising in Australia for a semi-professional photographer with medical qualifications to join the 7,000 kilometre expedition. (Perhaps a semi-professional doctor with photographic qualifications would be considered?) Applications close on 3 July. Further information: phone (03) 836 3857.

Greasy. Leon Blumer writes from Canada that he feels duty-bound to warn Australian and New Zealand outdoor enthusiasts intending to visit British Columbia within the next three or four years to steer clear of the west coast of Vancouver Island. There has been a massive oil spill from Washington State, USA, and only a feeble attempt by US authorities to clean up the mess. Don't visit Rim National Park or do the well-known West Coast Trail, and don't eat the fish..."

Corrections/Amplifications. The first two items in the 'Comments' column of the table of lightweight cameras in the *Wild Gear Survey* on page 65 of *Wild* no 31 should be transposed.

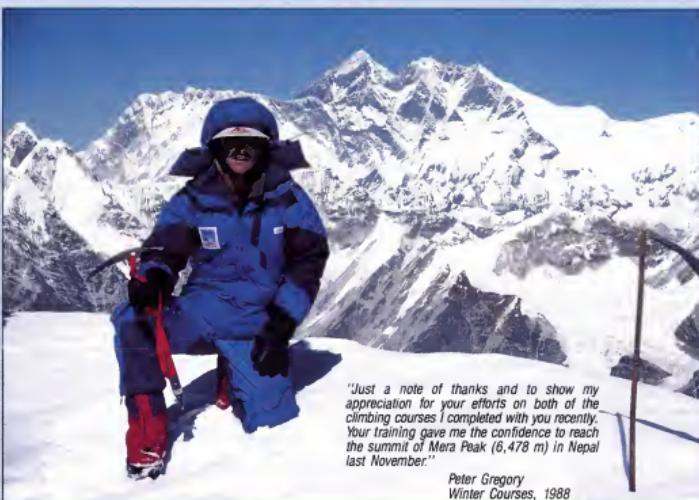
The prices of the four Flinders Camping products in the *Wild Equipment Survey* of gaiters on page 81 of *Wild* no 31 are incorrect. They should be \$45, \$50, \$39 and \$39 respectively. The 'Assorted Brands' in the table are JanSport gaiters.

Readers' contributions to this department, including colour slides, are welcome. Typed items of less than 200 words are more likely to be printed. Send contributions to the Editor, *Wild*, PO Box 415, Prahran, Victoria 3181.

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Winter Courses, 1988

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For further information please contact our office and talk to Glen (Operations) regarding our planned expeditions to Island Peak (6,189 m), Aconcagua (6,960 m), Changtse (7,560 m), Mustagh Ata (7,400 m) and Broad Peak (8,047 m).

Yours in the mountains
Costica (Greg) Grigorita
Director

Bird Basics

A guide to bird photography, by *John Kiely*

▲ THE NEST, IN A LOW SALT BUSH, WAS IN direct sunlight, with the hot sun beating down. With my equipment set up, I sat back, waiting for the adult birds to come in and feed their brood. The male crimson chat could be seen stalking around nearby salt bushes looking for the small, green grubs that he seemed to prefer for feeding his young. He would quickly fly back to the nest and stuff the grub down the first hungry beak that popped up.

I waited for the best moment to take the photo, for the action. Click.

The female chat was not so obliging. With the sun beating and perspiration running down my face, it was becoming unbearably hot. The female would fly to a nearby bush and just sit. She would even land on my camera, but she would not go to the nest. Sometimes she would flutter away through the grass, pretending she had a broken wing. All the time the male was feeding the young. I was ready to give up, but decided on one last attempt. I set up the hide, got inside and kept my fingers crossed. Within seconds she was at the nest feeding her brood. Within five minutes she had returned to the nest a dozen times. I had obtained my first photos of a pair of crimson chats. Hopefully, a few of my exposures would reveal that 'perfect shot'.

This encounter was typical of the many I've had photographing birds. It is often hard work, requiring a lot of patience, but with the reward of seeing nature at close quarters.

Having a love of wildlife since childhood and a passion for photography, it seemed only natural that the two should somehow meet. Some of my most memorable experiences in the bush have been stalking wildlife, particularly birds, with a camera.

Successful bird photography requires two main ingredients: equipment and, more importantly, the commitment and patience to spend the time needed to capture that ever-elusive shot.

It need not be elaborate, but with the necessary basic equipment you'll find that the quality of your photographs improves. Any good 35 millimetre single lens reflex camera is capable of good results, and with correct accessories these results can be equal to any.

The best place to start photographing birds is at a nest site. Once the young have hatched, the adults return to the nest regularly to feed, and this is the cue to set up your equipment. However, a word of caution. No photograph is worth a deserted nest. Extreme care must be taken—nothing can justify a photograph if the birds are put at risk. A good knowledge of the habits of the birds will help.

The trick for photographing birds at their nest is not a long telephoto lens but getting in close with a 135 or 200 millimetre lens. At times, a small extension tube may need to be



Top, nankeen kestrel. Right, crimson chat. All photos John Kiely



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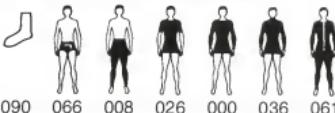
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placed between lens and camera in order to get near enough for the subject to fill the frame. I use a 90 millimetre macro lens and take most of my photographs from a distance of only about a metre. Many birds will tolerate a camera and other equipment close to their nest, but the sight of the photographer will cause them to become wary. Get in close and use a flash—you will be amazed at the results.

personal preference, but the bird should be shown with the greatest clarity and detail. For this reason I use a slow transparency film. I've had excellent results with Kodak Kodachrome 25, which I rate at 32 ASA. Lately, I have been using Fuji 50 ASA, which I've also found excellent. As the Fuji film is processed by E6 process, I can process it at home after a day's shooting and see the results immediately. If



Above: rufous whistler.

For the best photos, two flash guns are desirable: one to provide the main source of light, the other to fill in shadows. With flash guns mounted a short distance on either side of your camera, your photos will start to rise above simply a 'record shot'.

Another desirable piece of equipment (but not essential) is a motor winder. Add a tripod to this list and you have everything you require to start photographing birds. While necessary in photographing some species, a hide can be dispensed with for others. Experience is a great teacher here. The technique of taking photos without a hide is quite simple. Set the camera and flash on the tripod and focus the camera on the nest. With a remote cable-release plugged in to the motor winder, move about ten metres from the camera, sit back and wait for the action. I've found that early morning is a good time to start, as the adult birds are very active, hunting continually for food for their young.

Watch the nest closely, wait for the adults to deliver the food and for the young to poke their heads up and 'click'—with any luck you'll have taken your first bird photo. While the technique is easy, patience plays a big part as some birds return to the nest only once every hour or so. Be ready, as you may have just one chance to get that special photograph. Try to resist the temptation to take the shot as soon as the bird lands on the nest. Wait for the action—when the chicks stick their heads up for the adult to put the insect into the mouth of the hungriest.

The type of film used is largely dictated by

necessary, I return to the nest site the next day and keep trying to capture that shot you'll remember and value.

While photographs of birds taken at the nest can be beautiful, and indeed this is the only way of photographing many species, I prefer stalking with a long lens. A 400 or 600 millimetre lens is very useful, and a tripod is a vital part of my equipment. My camera is always attached to a tripod, unless circumstances dictate otherwise, in which case I use a shoulder pod. It's no use taking a beautiful photograph only to have it ruined by camera vibration. Long lenses can be difficult to use but the results are well worth the effort. I have recently taken to using a 1,000 millimetre lens for stalking. Weighing four kilograms, the lens is attached to a tripod which weighs a further eight kilograms. Carrying so much equipment in the bush (not to mention camera, cases and film) can become quite a burden but, again, the result is worth while.

Swamps and lagoons are good places to start this type of photography, and if a hide is set up the birds will come to you, making the task much easier. Studying the habits of birds before photographing them can be of great assistance and is time well spent.

The bush means different things to different people. To me it is being close to wildlife, photographing animals and birds—forever trying to get that elusive 'last shot'. Good hunting. ▲

John Kelyna is a Senior Sergeant with the Victoria Police. He has lived at various locations along the Murray River, which has been a major source of inspiration for his wildlife photography.

Wild Bushwalking



MT BARNEY AND THE BALLOW RIM

Queensland bushwalking's 'jewel in the crown', by *Laurence Knight*

▲ THE MT BARNEY MASSIF AND THE Ballow Rim are truly majestic landforms and tower 1,000 metres above the surrounding countryside. Together, they form the Mt Barney National Park, an island of wilderness set in a chain of National Parks stretching round the Scenic Rim, along the McPherson and Great Dividing Ranges. The area is an hour and a half's drive south of Brisbane and is just north of the New South Wales border.

Wild readers will have read about Mt Barney in previous issues, but what prompted Ralph Carlisle, editor of *The Mount Barney Guide*, to write that local walkers view Mt Barney 'with an attitude akin to worship'?

In the 130 square kilometres of National Park and State Forest covered by the *Mt Barney Forest Map*, there are over 20 peaks and hundreds of creeks. There are summits with 360° views, summits with no views, large summits and small summits. There are deep gorges, hidden waterfalls and quiet rock pools. There are lush rain forests, heaths, dense scrub, grass trees and orchids, and all manner of birds, fish, mammals, reptiles and crustaceans. Above all, there are scores of steep ridges, most of which are intimidating for inexperienced bushwalkers. It is this diversity that makes the region a four-season bushwalking paradise, especially for the 'gung-ho' set.

In the cooler months (April–October) most attention is focused on the Mt Barney massif. This includes East Peak, West Peak, North Peak, Isolated Peak, Leaning Peak, Midget Peak, Barrabool, Gwyala, Burrajum and adjacent Mt Ernest. The vegetation is relatively open and is pretty when in bloom—the orchids on Mt Ernest in September are not to be



Left, many classic routes on Mt Barney, such as Eagles Ridge (pictured), border on being rockclimbs. Above, camp in bad weather near Double Peak. All photos Laurence Knight

missed. The main attraction, however, is rock scrambling. All the ridges on Mt Barney are steep, and with the exception of the 'tourist' route' up East Peak (Pheasants Ridge), none is easy. This means that bushwalkers have the place to themselves.

Half of the classic routes (Savages, South-east, North, Midget, Short Barrabool, Long Barrabool and Gwyala

Ridges) are middle-grade and form the basis of enjoyable day-walks. The others (Mezzanine, Razorback, Logans, Eagles, Short Leaning Ridge, and Long Leaning Ridge) border on being rockclimbs. The latter can be really good fun for the suitably experienced and are in the same league as the 'tourist route' on Federation Peak, Tasmania. Route-finding ability is, of course, a prerequisite on all these ridges, as unintentional deviations can prove unsettling.

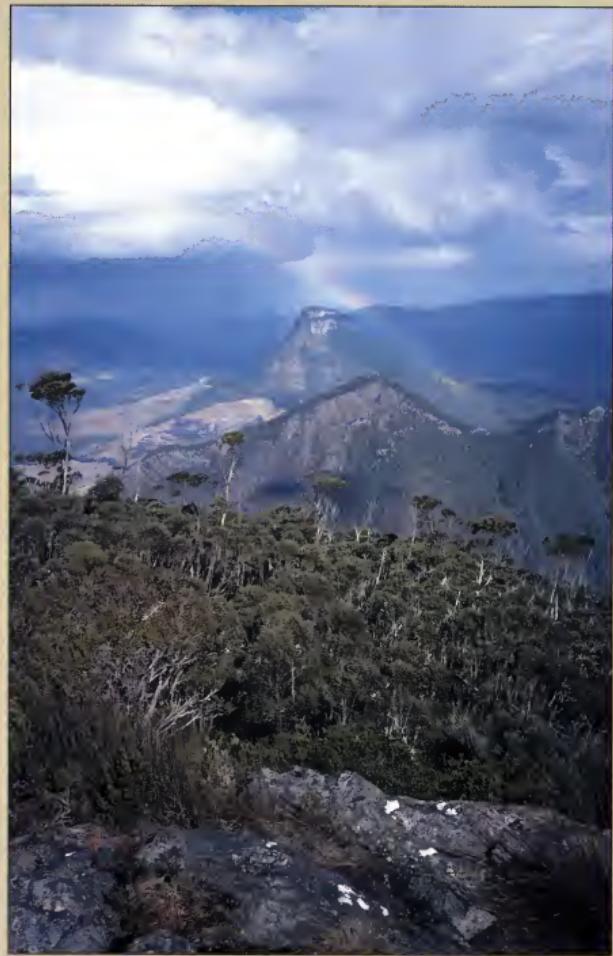
In contrast to the Mt Barney massif,

which is characterized by eucalypts, grass trees, banksias, leptosperums and rock slabs, the Ballow Rim and Barney Spur are almost entirely rain forest. The walking here is much less technical and, due to the canopy cover, is very enjoyable in the summer months (November–March) when the exposed ridges on Mt Barney are much too hot.



Above, the classic Logans Ridge, Mt Barney. Right, Mt Ernest (middle ground) and Mt Lindsey from East Peak. Far right, Short Barrabool Ridge, Mt Barney.

The forest on Ballow is open, and walking through the many walking-stick palms and Antarctic beech trees is like taking a step back millions of years to a time when Australia was part of the super-continent Gondwana. It is definitely a primeval area, and rock-hopping down any of the tributaries of Ballow Creek can give the impression that a face-to-face encounter with a yowie (the Australian equivalent of the yeti) is imminent. Trips around the Ballow Rim tend to be in the form of week-end 'through walks', with walkers spending a night out, often near Junction Peak. Junction Peak is the 'summit' of Mt Ballow, and can be approached from Mowburra and Durrumlea, Montserrat and Focal Peak, Minnages Mountain, Mt Clunie and the Junction, Nothofagus, and Big Lonely. Watching the sun or moon rise over Mt Barney from Montserrat or Double Peak is an experience that will be long remembered



and is not to be missed. A third aspect of the Barney–Ballow region is rock-hopping in the creek systems. Many of the trips using ridges as the ascent routes use creeks for descents. Navigationally, creeks are easier to descend than ridges, and in the warmer months offer the opportunity to cool off when the going gets hot. Combining ridges and creeks into logical routes creates an aesthetic balance which makes the wilderness experience even more enjoyable. The creeks also provide access to many ridges.

There are two main creek systems—Cronans and Barney Creeks. Cronans Creek drains Mt Ernest and the eastern side of the Mt Barney massif. While the main branch is degraded in its lower reaches by lantana infestations (a

legacy of human intrusion), its tributaries are untouched and rarely visited. Barney Creek drains the northern and western sides of the Mt Barney massif and the northern and eastern sides of the Ballow Rim. While many visit just to swim in the Upper and Lower Portals (Barney Creek passes through two gorges containing excellent swimming holes), others come to explore its tributaries. These include Ballow Creek, Barrabool Creek and Barney Gorge.

Together, the creeks and mountains form a complementary whole, which even after years of consistent investigation still has the potential to offer unexplored routes—not bad for a pocket of wilderness smaller than Tasmania's Eastern Arthurs.

So how do you get there? From the

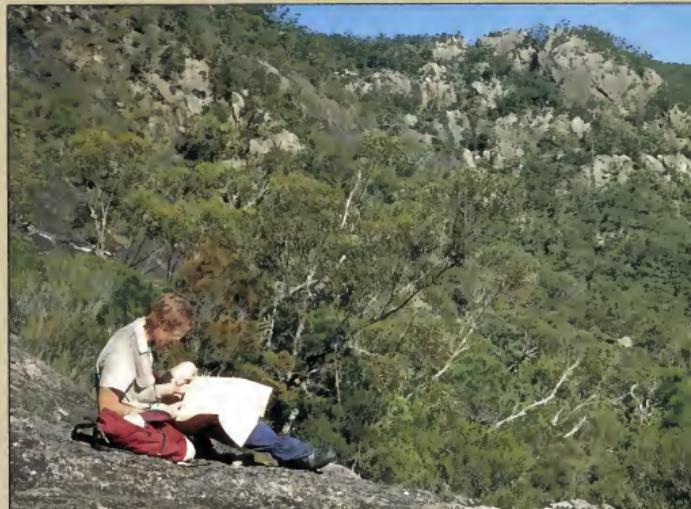
Queensland side, Rathdowney and Boonah are the gateways, while Woodendong provides access to the southern side of the McPherson Range. Details on how to reach various routes are comprehensively covered in *The Mount Barney Guide*, *The Bushwalker's Guide to South East Queensland* and *The Bushwalk Book of South-east Queensland*. Brief mention of the area can also be found in *100 Walks in South Queensland*, *A Guide to Northeastern New South Wales* and *Discovering New South Wales Rainforests*. The Royal Automobile Club of Queensland *Gold Coast and Northern Rivers* and National Roads and Motoring Association *Far North Coast* road maps are helpful in getting to the the area. The : 25,000 Mt Barney Forestry Map is the best topographic map for walking. Other useful topographic maps include *Mt Lindesay* (1 : 100,000, Natmap) and *Mt Clunie, Mt Lindesay, Maroon and Teviot* (1 : 25,000, Sunmap).

The Mt Barney-Ballow Rim region is not in the same league as South-west Tasmania. It is nevertheless one of the best training grounds for serious bushwalking in Australia and is the nearest thing bushwalkers in southern Queensland have to a sacred site.

▲

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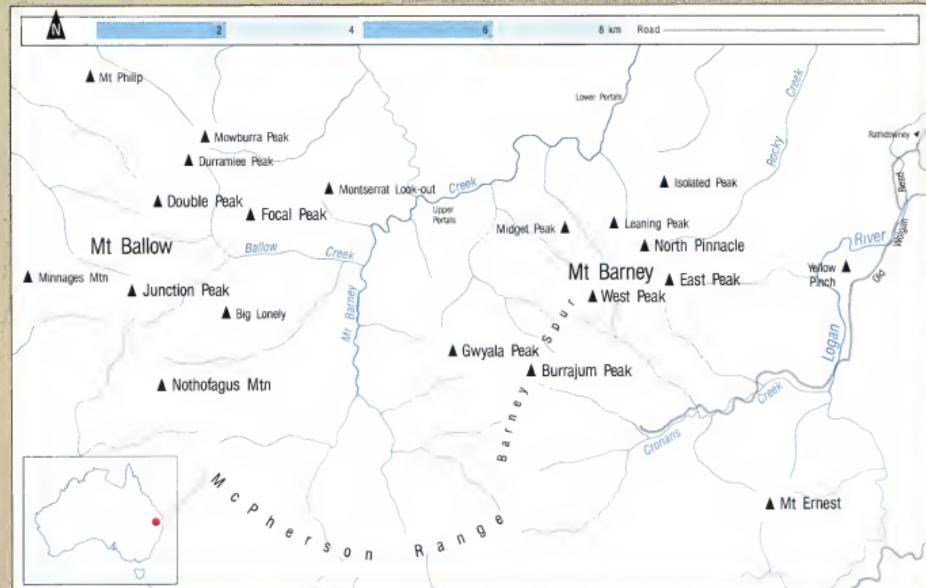
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Laurence Knight is a post-graduate university student. Since his first visit to Mt Barney, in 1980, he has done 60 walks in the area. He has also walked extensively in the Australian Alps and Tasmania.

Mt Barney



Wild Ski Touring

Wild JAPAN

Oriental cross country downhill skiing impressions,
by John Morrell



▲ IT WAS THE END OF MAY, LATE SPRING, and the snow on the rice paddies across the road from my flat had melted. The local farmers were emerging from a typical Hokkaido winter; a long cold winter. Spring was blowing warm and lethargic.

Behind the rice fields, dense forests merged into the steeply cliffted ridges and peaks of the Aishibetsu Range, which still held its mantle of snow. Throughout the winter, -30° blizzards and days of cold, dry, vertically-falling snow had been interspersed with sparkling, crystal-clear days when temperatures were never more than -15° at midday and a weak sun shone in the southern sky. On these days, from my front window, the sharp peak of Mt Aishibetsu could be seen clearly against the blue sky. After staring at the icy upper reaches of this enticing mountain through a winter of Nordic skiing, Phil Marshall (a friend from Alaska) and I finally set out to climb and ski it, chasing the last of the snow up the mountainside in a race with the heat of the coming summer.

The start of our climb ascended from flooded rice paddies by a sharp forested ridge. We climbed through budding larch, red pine and silver birch forests. We climbed on skis with skins attached. As we gained height, gusts of wind blew ice fragments vertically upwards from the steepening cliffs to our left. We stayed well back from where nature was juggling lumps of ice. About midday we climbed over a peak on the ridge and skied down into a col. The cloud base was just above us, obscuring our objective. We were surrounded by a panorama of mountain peaks, and decided to lunch near a copse of silver birch, out of the buffeting wind. The report had been for clearing weather, and as we ate lunch the cloud base gradually lifted. Our spirits rose with the rising cloud and falling wind. We quickly packed and continued up another peak on the undulating ridge, hoping to make the most of the clearing weather. As we continued on skis, the ice and steepening angle soon forced us to change to crampons and ice axes at the top of the next rise.

'I think we've got some climbing company', Phil shouted down to me as he removed his skis. I thought we must have met a descending party, although there were no other tracks—which could have been explained by snow falls the previous night. To my surprise, he was pointing at the ground when I reached him. Bear tracks. A big one. Phil estimated our intruder to be about 500 kilograms—500 kilograms of hungry, freshly-woken brown bear. We were still surrounded by mist, and for all we knew our 'climbing companion' may have been no more than 20 metres away, the limit of our vision.

Locals tend to stay away from the

mountain peaks in spring in deference to the estimated 1,000 or more bears who live in Hokkaido's wilderness areas, National Parks and forests. As we stood pondering whether to put on crampons and continue to the summit or return back down the ridge, the last of the cloud literally vanished into thin air. The final ice slope to the summit was alluringly

Across the valley, to the east of our village, rise the Tokachi Mountains, a range at the southern extremity of the Daisetsusan National Park. The Tokachi Range is volcanic and at its centre rises Mt Tokachi, a still-active volcano. In mid-winter, the sulphuric smoke belching from its cone presents a surrealistic contrast to the pristine cold



Left, the author Telemarking to death or glory near the icy summit of Mt Fuji. Phil Marshall. Above, Mt Fuji, Japan's sacred mountain, seen across Lake Kawaguchi and cherry blossom. John Morell

close. Yet where was the bear? The tracks were very recent; no fresh snow had blown into them. With the air now clear, we tentatively peeked over the ridge. The bear had climbed snow and ice cliffs to our right which would have challenged any mountaineer, and had gone down the steep valley to our left. For as far as we could see, a tiny line of tracks vanished into far-away forests.

Reassured of our isolation, we crammed up the final steep ice slope to the summit of Mt Aishibetsu under a blue sky, keeping an ever-watchful eye on the valley where the bear had vanished, hoping not to meet on our descent.

▲

Such wilderness in Japan seems an anomaly. All we read in the papers is crowds, industry, urban blight, sardine subways and more crowds. But Japan's land mass is 80% uplands and mountains which offer an environment to challenge this 'view from back home'; an environment which offers world-class ice climbing, mountaineering, alpine skiing and cross country downhill skiing. The wild bears of Aishibetsu and their relatives that live around the volcanic peaks, ridges, mountains and wilds of Hokkaido are evidence of the extent of this mountain wilderness.

calm of the surrounding mountains. The peaks which stretch along the range, and the valleys, forests and ridges which drape their sides, are home to bears in summer. But in winter while they are sleeping, this area is covered in several metres of snow and offers excellent cross country downhill skiing. Unique climatic patterns add the final seal of approval for free-heelers. For months on end, day-time temperatures never rise above zero, and strong winds are a rarity. This means virtually no wind-slab or freeze-thaw sequences. The result is very low avalanche potential in mid-winter. The lack of wind also has another advantage: powder snow. On any day from mid-January to the beginning of April, there is excellent powder in the protection of the huge Hokkaido red pines that drape the mountain sides. In February, midday can be calm, sunny and -15°. In these conditions, the treeless alpine peaks and plateaus offer unlimited touring and powder skiing. I had heard of this area's potential for back-country skiing before I first visited Japan, but the real surprise on my arrival was the absence of people—there is no one in the mountains in mid-winter. A relative lack of holidays is partly responsible, as is an abundance of snow and mountains. Another factor is that mountain enthusiasts tend to concentrate on the more glamorous activity of ice climbing rather than winter ski touring.

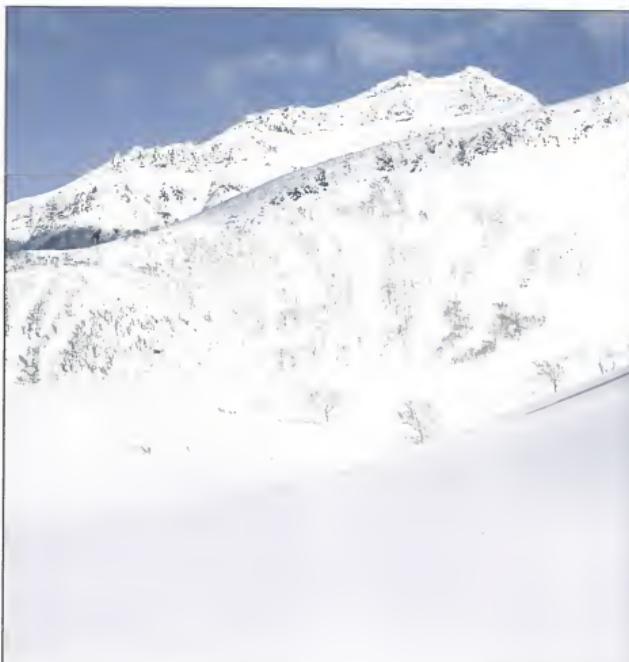
It didn't take long before my skiing in these mountains degenerated (some might say matured) into day climbs from small secluded lodges. My tent has been gathering a bit of mould since I discovered the Taisetsu Lodge in the north of the park. In the early days, one trip took a companion and me up a ten kilometre summer forest road to the foot of the Taisetsu Mountains. We camped in deep powder snow in which it's not very easy to build a tent platform. That night we recorded -27° on my minimum-reading thermometer, and my sleeping bag only just kept me alive. Different levels of comfort pertain to outdoor activities, but the next day we came across nirvana—a lodge, or old climbing hut, which has been restored for summer hiking and is cut off from civilization for six months of the year. The caretaker and his wife have lived in these mountains for many years. With gestures and smiles that would bridge any communication gap they welcomed us, rare winter visitors and even rarer foreigners, with the traditional offer of a bath. This seems mundane, but it was a



Above, brass-monkey country! (Outside bath, Takachi Mountains.) Middle, skiing the Plateau of Lakes, Taisetsu Mountains. Right, Telemarking in Daisetsusan National Park. Morrell

small pool-size bath heated from thermal springs. Outside, the untracked wilderness had endless powder runs—hence the mould on my tent, a dust-covered old Svea stove and a sleeping bag that doubles remarkably well as a doona.

After eight winters in Japan, I have long since discarded my double-camber touring skis, a dictate of local skiing conditions. There is only one type of board for this terrain and this snow—single camber, soft tip and wide. Without single camber, the lack of hard-snow base makes it almost impossible to reverse a double camber, resulting in stilted skiing. Width is required just to stay afloat in snow that has you skiing without ever coming into contact with anything resembling *terra firma*. It's all base skiing, upper body rotation and edging—pure powder skiing. The runs vary in angle, the best being alluring gaps open in the vast



forested ridges and beckon like the mythical sirens who lured sailors to destruction. The best way to ski these conditions is to use parallel turns—why waste a good powder-snow run by Telemarking it? Telemarking barely works in deep powder—rhythm is lacking and flotation is halved because most of the ski's surface area is too far from the skier's centre of gravity to support him.

Last winter there were more cold, clear February days than I could remember. In this idyllic powder terrain, Phil, Gino and I hatched a plot to dust down the Svea stove, clean the tent, zip up the sleeping bag and head for Mt Fuji. Both Gino and Phil had climbed in the Himalayas and the Americas, and between us we hoped to climb the still ice-covered Mt Fuji (3,772 metres) and make a rare Telemark descent.

The true adventure may well have been trying to get our skis and packs through Tokyo's suburban train network at peak hour, but we survived and caught a bus to the flanks of Mt Fuji. We left the tourists purchasing pumice-stone souvenirs at the end of the road and traversed round the mountain, away from the crush of civilization. We camped on a snow-covered summer climbing track half-way up the mountain, our camp protected by a small forest of birch trees from the incessant winds.

That afternoon we attracted a few visitors, including a family of five who came for a cup of tea. They were an ice-climbing family from Tokyo, and the father had climbed Mt Fuji many times in winter. He regaled us with stories of accidents, avalanches and history while the sun set kilometres below over the lakes and forests at the foot of the mountain.

'Hey, breakfast lovers, how ya doin?' it could only be Phil, scrunching round on the ice with Stateside bonhomie at 4.30 am. 'How is it? A bit windy?', I hopefully

Japan





other hand, the weather was slowly clearing as I waited for Gino and Phil to encircle the crater's rim. The sun revealed a slope that was the most enticing I'd ever seen. It seemed limitless in its extent and conformity of angle, and having made the decision to ski I was keen to get started. I quickly unstrapped my crampons and removed my Karhu Extremes from my pack. Phil had already set off and Gino was considering whether to ski when I clicked into my Chouinard 'rat traps', strapped on my pack and said my prayers. I was confident on my edges, but also well aware that rat-trap bindings, which are

between skis and snow on the turns. Beside us billowed great cumulus clouds and all around was air and wind and light. We took long Telemark runs, slowing down only when our thighs started to burn, confident now of snow, ability and uniformity of angle. To avoid fatigue we varied the turns from Telemark to parallel to Telemark.

Back in Yoshida Gully, we reached Phil's cached skis, and from there the three of us whooped our way back through the now-slushy snow to our camp—a ski descent of one and half hours. We had successfully Telemarked from the top of Mt Fuji; the only mishaps



enquired. 'This may be as good as it gets. Visibility is fine and the ice is great for cramponing. Let's do it.'

The climbing was exhilarating. Below, scattered cumulus clouds occasionally parted to reveal the world dropping away in a jumble of ice, thick conifer forests and distant lakes and towns. Beyond rose the jagged snow-covered peaks of the Japanese Alps. At about 3,100 metres, Phil cached his skis. It was the limit according to his equation. From here the angle steepened to the head of the Yoshida Osawa, a huge gully blown out of the side of the mountain. Gino and I continued carrying our Telemark skis. Even if they only decorated our packs, at least we would have a choice. 'Are you going to ski it?' asked Chilean Gino. 'I'll decide at the top', I replied. 'Well, us banana republicans have got to stick together. Let's carry them up.'

The rim is surrealistic, a landscape made ephemeral by scudding clouds which hide and expose massive ice cliffs, rock buttresses and snow slopes. On the crater's rim are rows of red, ice-encrusted Tori, or gates—wind-battered wooden icons, gateways to peace, Shinto style.

I had decided not to ski down. It was an icy 40° slope with a fall zone of many kilometres, self-arrest grips or not. There was also a howling wind and I had some altitude problems in coming from sea level to 4,000 metres in 24 hours. On the

wider than Telemark skis, can throw you if your edging angle becomes too sharp. For this reason I'd brought my widest Telemark skis. I had also made sure they were stiff in the tail as a soft ski, no matter how sharp the edges, 'don't cut no ice', so to speak.

The first turn was on rock-hard ice at the volcano's rim, with kilometres of space dropping away between my legs. I felt a mixture of adrenalin, fear and excitement as I turned through a Shinto gate and dropped over the edge. The first 300 metres was pure concrete—very delicate edging and careful, slow turns followed by a shortly-angled run to make the edges bite hard, those thin metal edges being the only things between me and the bottom of the mountain. Gino came down some minutes later with a novel approach to self-arresting: his ice axe in one hand. It was a good thing, too, as he used it twice to stop himself. About 300 metres below the summit, Phil, who had been traversing back and forth on crampons looking for a 'melt window' in the ice (from the volcano), waved us over. 'It's hot, give me your camera and go for it.' Until this point it had been a descent on skis; now it became a ski descent. The Telemarking was two-step fall-line skiing and knee-butting edging, and air

were Gino's self-arrests and Phil being hit by small wind-blown rocks. While Gino caught the bus off the mountain, Phil and I hiked down the now-disused walking track to the town of Fuji-Yoshida. The verdant forests protected a cool moss-covered floor, and occasionally opened up to reveal old shrines and huts dating back more than 100 years. As we descended the 15 kilometres to Fuji-Yoshida, we walked through blossoming cherries and past fields of violets, Japanese magnolias, wisteria and silver-weed. At the foot of the track we came to the Sengen Shrine, home of the goddess sisters who protect the local town; a symbolic gateway that has guarded the entrance to Mt Fuji for hundreds of years. We reached the shrine in the middle of a festival to mark Boys' Day, and as the icy heights of Mt Fuji rose behind us, we drank holy water from the monks and relaxed in the shade of towering cedars.

Boys' Day marks spring, a coming of age, of escaping childhood. After a winter of snow, ice and adventure in Japan, it seemed appropriate to start thinking seriously about summer's lazy days. ▲

John Mornell started kayaking at 14, eventually racing at State and National level. Since 1981 he has taught Nordic skiing in Australia and Japan, spending much of that time in Japan

Wild Bushwalking



First Step

Robyn Sperling's first foray into the bush took her to Bungonia, and beyond

ps



▲ WHENEVER I THINK OF MY FIRST bushwalk, I always think of a certain café, deep in the heart of Melbourne. It was here I made that first conscious, yet tentative, step towards becoming a bushwalker.

Amid the chatter and cappuccinos, Gerard invited me to join him on a walk in the Wonnangatta-Moroka National Park at Easter. He told me it would be a 'reasonably hard walk'. I took all this in my stride, and didn't pay a great deal of attention to such trivialities. If he could do it, I thought, so could I. This was in spite of the fact that he was an experienced bushwalker, and the closest I'd been to a bushwalk was a Sunday stroll in the Dandenongs.

His eyes glowed excitedly as he spread maps and guides on the table, and began to trace the walk across the Crosscut Saw to Mt Speculation, onwards to the Viking, the Razor, and finally back to Macalister Springs. I caught my breath as my mind raced ahead. With the promise of adventure, I put aside any doubts. I preferred to think that the names which leapt from the maps—the Bastards Neck, the Devils Staircase, Mt Buggery, Hells Window, and Horrible Gap—were merely the product of someone's colourful imagination. So, in spite of them, my confidence remained intact.

We left the car-park near Macalister Springs in good spirits. It was a fine, warm and golden afternoon. Our animated conversation punctured the silence of the bush. Laughing, I tripped and fell on flat ground as I tried to keep up with Gerard. As we walked on I felt the bush close in around us. Surrounded by snow gums, I stopped to catch my breath. I ran my hands over the cool wrinkled bark. Flesh-like, it rippled with movement.

We reached Macalister Springs as the sun began to dissolve behind the Crosscut Saw. Gerard went to look for a suitable campsite while I sat by my pack and nursed sore feet. Next morning we woke early, to the sound of excited voices vying with bird calls as the hordes of Easter walkers began to stir. Excitement bubbled through our veins as we viewed the Crosscut Saw for the first time in broad daylight. It reminded me of a stegosaurus—the jagged ridge rose like bony armour on its back. I gazed up in awe at its fearsome beauty; far more imposing than I had anticipated. Fear mingled with my excitement as we followed the track to Mt Howitt. I wanted to stride out and follow Gerard's long and measured steps, but my pack made my steps clumsy and my stride short. With slow and increasingly uncertain steps, I hauled myself up. From the summit of Mt Howitt, mountains appeared to huddle around its ample bulk. Stretching far into the distance, they began to fade, finally uniting with the blue horizon. A wave of panic swept over me as my fear of

heights took hold. I wanted to turn my back on the whole idea and return to the safety of Macalister Springs, but it was already too late. I had come too far on my journey of self-discovery to turn back. We shared a slab of fruit cake while I nervously chewed over my chances of survival.



Left, the Devils Staircase. Andrew Brookes. Above, Gerard and Robyn, all smiles on the summit of Mt Howitt. Gerard Closs

Like a small animal, the Alpine Walking Track prowled purposefully over the rise. On and on we climbed over the sharp-edged Crosscut Saw. Nervously, I trudged after Gerard. He stopped frequently for me to catch up, but even though he had slowed his pace, I still found it too fast. As he pulled away once again I cursed my foolishness and his long legs. A blanket of heat wrapped itself round me. I began to feel drunk with exhaustion as I staggered across the flat grassy summit of Mt Buggery.

From Mt Buggery the track descends steeply into the saddle of Horrible Gap. Suddenly my knees began to buckle as I fought a rush of nausea-ridden vertigo. Propelled forward by the weight of my pack, I plunged into the clutches of a scrawny snow gum. With equal quantities of blood, sweat and tears, I rose to my feet. Horrible Gap had begun to look very horrible indeed. Slowly I climbed down the mountain, lured only by Gerard's offer of a cup of tea. There was resignation in his voice; I knew that he had already said goodbye to the Viking and the Razor.

We had intended to reach Mt Speculation and the water supply at Camp Creek, but by now the sun had begun to set. There was little alternative but to make camp in the very dry Horrible Gap. Horrified, I realized that we had one litre of water to last until we reached Camp Creek, next morning. I savoured the luxury of a cup of tea as we sparingly rationed our supply.



Above, the Viking from Mt Howitt. Right, on the Crosscut Saw. Chris Baxter

I lay awake a long time that night, fearfully contemplating the rest of the walk. When I finally fell asleep, my dreams were of nothing but water. I woke with a start in the middle of the night, to the sound of raindrops. Excitedly I stuck my head out of the tent, only to discover it was dry leaves rustling in the breeze. Disappointed, I lapsed once again into an exhausted sleep. This time I dreamt of Burke and Wills.

We broke camp early next morning, a chill still in the air. Silently, we climbed over the roughly hewn jigsaw puzzles of rock which rise steeply above our campsite. Standing in a radiant profusion of everlasting daisies glowing like a reflection of the sun, my eyes were drawn upwards to a solitary tree, standing like a lone piper, near the summit of Mt Speculation. Wearily, I realized that we still had a long climb ahead.

When we reached the campsite just below Mt Speculation, we threw our packs to the ground with relief. Armed

with water bottles, Gerard scuttled ahead, down the rough track leading to Camp Creek. I staggered behind, cursing my stupidity and vowing never to accept another invitation to bushwalk. I finally reached Camp Creek to find Gerard enthusiastically guzzling water. I dropped down beside him, and hurriedly snatched a drink for fear that he might drain the creek.

After filling our water bottles, we noticed a disgruntled group of four-wheel-drivers standing in front of a locked gate. They were annoyed at having their entry to the fire track leading to Mt Speculation blocked. Finally, after a lengthy conversation, Gerard convinced them that the view from the top of the mountain was worth the effort of the walk. Still thirsty, we went back to the creek. Later, returning from the summit, the four-wheel-drive group travelled on the track running beside Camp Creek. Not realizing that we had dropped down to the creek, one said to his mate: 'Geez, I tell you what, those walkers must be tough—did you hear where they'd walked from?' Gerard and

I looked at each other and burst into a series of explosive giggles. My confidence began to return, and once again I became aware of the sights and sounds of the bush. The bushwalk was no longer a trial by ordeal.

We had planned to spend a relaxing afternoon on Mt Speculation, so we contentedly settled down to a time of reverie and recovery. The valleys yawned at our feet as we sat in the open grandstand of the saddle below Mt Speculation. The ranges began to throb with a distant drum of thunder. The sombre blue silhouette of the Razor sliced upwards from the dense forest. I looked across to Mt Howitt, treeless and glowing gold in the afternoon sun. Finally, my eyes came to rest on the ridge rising up to Mt Speculation. Snow gums, the 'old men of the bush', gleamed as streams of light burst through the summer storm clouds. Mesmerized by the scene, my sore muscles and tired feet vanished as I began to truly see the Australian bush for the first time.

Gerard met a friend in another of the many groups on Mt Speculation. In



Crosscut Saw



hushed tones he admitted to the short distance we had covered. Incredulously, his friend gazed at us, remarking on our laziness. I confided that it was my first walk; he shook his head and smiled understandingly.

We awoke late next morning, so missed the sunrise. Slightly disappoint-

Instead of camping at Macalister Springs for our last night in the mountains, we decided to pitch our tent in a saddle below Mt Howitt, with clear views of the ranges to the east and west. Sitting with a mug of tea in hand, we waited for the sun to set. The slope before me began to sway, burnished



ed, we walked across to the edge of Mt Speculation. Every valley was filled with mist. Spellbound, we cast off a small boat of dreams, across the fairy-tale sea of marshmallow. The air was crisp as we made our way to the treeless ridge. From the top of the Crosscut Saw we turned for one last look; Mt Cobbler and Mt Speculation were now obscured by fog rising from mist-filled valleys. Returning along the Crosscut Saw with senses refined and refreshed, my attention was drawn to a myriad of sights and sounds I had not noticed before: the perfume of the wildflowers, the minute rustle of skinks in the dry grass, and the hypnotic power of the chirping cicadas.

gold in the setting sun. Every valley was etched sharply against the sky. And the sky, a velvet sheen of darkening colour, burned with the last desperate rays of the sun. Beneath this shadow of darkness, silken-winged bats rustled as the golden crust of the horizon dropped from view.

Somewhere in the distance, something glittered. On a lonely road, a car's headlights cut through the night. With a pang of regret, I remembered it was the last night of our walk... ▲

Robyn Sperling has been bushwalking for three years since her 'boots and all' introduction described in this article. She has explored many parts of Victoria, and her interests now include cross country skiing, snow camping and wilderness photography.

Wild Canoeing

PREMIER PADDLING

White water thrills in New South Wales, 'the premier State', with *David Carmichael*



KAYAKS ACROSS KOSCIUSKO

Australian paddling can't get much higher

▲ THE STREAM WHICH HAS BEEN immortalized in AB Paterson's (1864-1941) classic poem, *The Man from Snowy River*, epitomizes the rugged beauty of Australia as it flows through some of the most demanding country New South Wales and Victoria have to offer. And for many canoeists the trip from the NSW-Victorian border to Buchan epitomizes the classic outdoor adventure—demanding rapids, scenery on a grand scale, the majestic Tullloch Ard Gorge, a feeling of isolation and leaving the rest of the world behind; a time warp to the days of Banjo Paterson's writing. But, as I was to discover one day in late spring, this is not the only section of the Snowy of interest to paddlers.

The previous winter, a friend had approached me with a map of the Mt Kosciusko area. I assumed it was to



Left, the cold grey reality of paddling the upper Snowy in (late) winter. Above, life can be a drag, but it's not so bad when a passing skier lends a hand. Top right, in places the only canoeable line is a narrow chute between the boulders. Bottom right, into the boil. All photos David Carmichael

discuss a forthcoming skiing trip, but the talk was of canoeing—a high-level trip on the Snowy above Guthega Pondage, late in the ski season to guarantee a good water level from snow melt. Preposterous! I had seen this stretch of white water on many a ski trip. The river is narrow and boulder-filled. The water temperature during the proposed season would be icy, and the banks smothered in snow. I dismissed the project with a barrage of arguments and alternatives.

But we duly found ourselves at Guthega ski resort, on the roof of Australia, our cars laden with boats. Again the Kosciusko map was produced—the trip would 'go'. The previous day we'd paddled a low Thredbo River from Rutledges Hut to the Perisher-Smiggin Holes Road. The planned excursion for the following day



had been for the Snowy from Munyang Power Station to Island Bend, but insufficient water was being released into the river. So it was in the warmth of the Thredbo Youth Hostel that an alternative trip was brought out of the closet. The heat of the fire was seductive...I agreed.

We left one vehicle at Guthega and proceeded towards Charlottes Pass, the highest ski resort in NSW, doing the age-old canoeist's car shuttle. The

dowhill-skiing season had finished but cross country skiers abounded, taking advantage of the good weather and traffic-free roads. As we unloaded the kayaks a car-full of skiers passed, bemused expressions on their faces. Our protective clothing included wet-suits, thermal underwear, woollen vests, spray jackets, neoprene boots, thin Balaclavas (worn under our helmets) and our secret weapon, silk

inner gloves under rubber ones (handy when not used for washing dishes). I also donned sunglasses to counter the glare of the snow.

Rigging two-inch nylon webbing round the front of our craft, we proceeded to drag them along the snow-covered road. Upon reaching the ski tow, nearly 500 metres away, we climbed a small ridge overlooking the resort. The going was

bodies, splashing and stinging our faces as we ploughed forward, sending shivers through our spines despite protective clothing.

A one-and-a-half-metre-drop was approached with caution. The river fell into a small pool then swirled away in a further steep chute. I braced into a small back eddy to take photos. The cold bit my fingers as I removed my gloves to

deck, flipping the kayak. Normally a roll would have been forthcoming, but the intense cold slows and numbs reflexes and shortens breath. The paddler was swimming almost before he realized it. He clambered ashore, but there was only slight relief here. Very cold, but not hypothermic, we continued, allowing working muscles to reheat our bodies.

The river flattened and Spencers Creek emerged on the right. Lunch, a mixture of sandwiches and energy bars, was hastily eaten on a large weather-beaten rock which had shed its burden of snow. Replacing our wet gloves was a painful exercise. A slow 20 minutes passed before my fingers were relieved of a stinging numbness.

Mainly to preserve our boats, we portaged a small drop with a nasty rock midstream. We entered a second steep section with several long rapids. Suddenly, a foot-bridge came into view. We had used it many times when skiing out of Guthega but it seemed strangely out of place on a canoe trip. Two puzzled skiers watched us from the comfort of a nearby chalet.

The rapids continued. At the end of a grade-three section containing several haystacks, we suddenly came out on still water—water dammed by Guthega Pondage. A short distance further the spillway came into view. The trip was almost over. Returning to the car at Charlottes Pass, the setting sun lit the peaks surrounding Spencers Creek—and our imaginations. We had surely captured the altitude record for a canoe trip in Australia, in a venture long to be remembered. ▲

Above, leaning hard to avoid capsizing.

arduous, the sludgy snow making each step difficult. The heat of the sun radiated from the brilliant white surface. On reaching the top I was perspiring freely, despite the low air temperature. Before me, sweeping away to the horizon, the Main Range towered defiantly, huge but unthreatening clouds billowing from its summits. Mt Kosciusko was clearly visible. Directly before us the ground dropped away to the river, snow gums and the incline concealing its sparkling waters. One of our group, who had fallen behind, received assistance on the final leg of the climb from some passing skiers. We paused briefly to take our bearings, then made a bee-line for the confluence of the Snowy with Blue Lake Creek, sidling only to avoid several patches of low, slippery heath which the sun had exposed. The descent proved much easier than the climb, our boats straining forward with gravity.

Arriving at the river, the water level was disappointingly low, exposing numerous rocks. However, we were aware that the river narrowed downstream and that this would alleviate the problem. I slid into my kayak and set off. Our boats required constant manoeuvring to avoid rocks and to locate the best passage of current. The Snowy began to constrict, and the rocks submerge. Spray soaked our upper

operate my camera. The first paddler powered over the fall and was buried in the turbulent foam at its base. He popped free without difficulty but was forcefully diverted from the clear route in midstream. Unable to realign before the second drop, a narrow slot between the bank and a large boulder was his only choice—a passage so tight that both blades of his paddle had to be raised above the water so as not to restrict his progress. Another of the group was also flung into this line and had to follow the same procedure.

We paddled on, flanked by granite bearing the weight of snow-drifts which had resisted the change of season and the warmth of spring. The landscape was harsh—water, ice and stone—and almost devoid of vegetation. Yet it was these very conditions that made the trip unique. As we rounded a bend, the thunder of a rapid announced its presence, issuing its challenge. The river dropped from sight. A check revealed a chute tapering into a boisterous stopper. The first kayak pulled sharply out of a swirling eddy and picked up speed as it neared the lip of the turbulence then plunged into the froth, boat and paddler disappearing from view. The paddler surfaced downstream, soaked but jubilant. The next craft followed in a similar fashion, but while submerged a strong cross-current pressured the fibreglass



David Carmichael (see Contributors in *Wild* no 21) began bushwalking while at school, then branched into other outdoor pursuits—kayaking, cross country skiing, canyoning and canyoning. He has walked and kayaked in his home state of NSW, Victoria, Tasmania and New Zealand.

Snowy River



GOING DOWN THE GOODRADIGBEE

Pioneering a 'new' section of river



▲ SOME YEARS AGO DURING A CAVING trip to Wee Jasper, a popular caving area in south-eastern New South Wales, I first saw the Goodradigbee River, a fast-flowing, turbulent stream which drains the north-eastern boundaries of Kosciusko National Park before winding its way past the Brindabella Mountains, near the Australian Capital Territory border, to finally end in the backwaters of the Burrinjuck Dam. The possibility of canoeing the river was attractive; a check of the relevant contour maps confirmed its feasibility.

The river can be roughly divided into three sections; a short upper stretch, flowing through farmland upstream from the remote settlement of Brindabella; an even shorter but highly demanding gorge down to the confluence with Flea Creek; and a final stretch offering a pleasant, longer paddle through scenic countryside. Over several week-ends, I'd paddled the upper and lower sections (and a small part of the gorge). However, it was in the fiercely-dropping second gorge (80 metres in six and a half kilometres) between McDonalds Flat and Flea Creek that our party had been forced to withdraw. Two spills resulted in

broken boats, lost paddles and battered and aching canoeists—round one to the Goodradigbee.

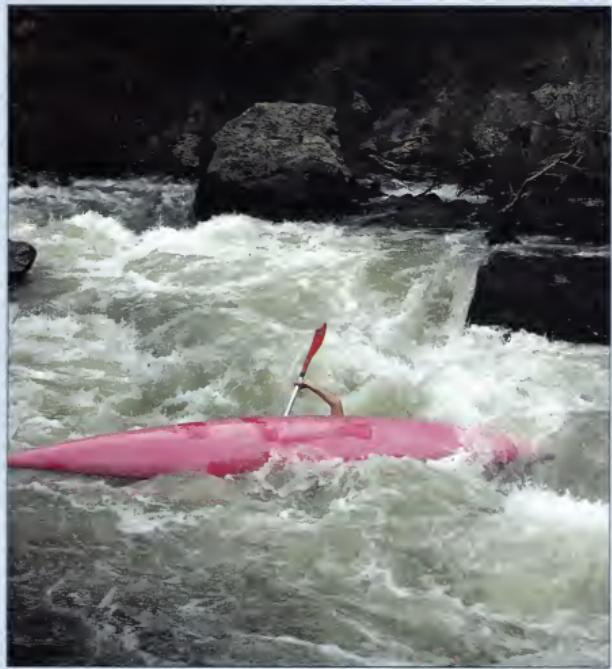
We returned for a second attempt. The river was running high with melt from the residual snow-drifts of the Cooleman, Long and Currango high plains. The water was freezing. A swim in these conditions could be dangerous, with hypothermia a real possibility. We established our base camp at the Flea Creek—Goodradigbee junction, an ideal site with four-wheel-drive access, and proceeded to Brindabella to launch our craft at the nearby bridge. It was a superb day, the sky a deep radiant blue. We eased into the current just above the bridge. Minutes later, a paddle blade was fractured on a submerged rock—an ominous sign so early in the trip.

Downstream, the river narrows, picking up speed. A small creek enters as a noisy, energetic waterfall on the left-hand side. From there to McDonalds Flat is a very tight gorge of grade two or three, often not much more than a boat-length wide. Flood lines scar the steep rocky banks. We'd paddled this section before and progress was swift. A small but powerful stopper round a blind

Above, a nasty stopper above McDonalds Flat. All photos David Carmichael

corner generated some excitement, as one by one our boats were buried in the foaming water, only to pop free seconds later. After 40 minutes, we arrived at the flat, marked by a large deep pool. Accelerating across the calm water, our boats rode up a small beach opposite. We scrambled out and devoured a snack.

Ebbing from the pool, the river quietly drew away, giving little indication of the turbulence ahead. Our map indicated that the Goodradigbee does a large sweeping 'detour' before swinging back to meet Flea Creek. An enforced walk-out from this section up sheer, ti-tree covered, boulder-filled banks and then through the dense scrub of the surrounding hills would be a difficult and demanding exercise. The thought lingered only briefly. Our craft drifted in the crystal-clear water over a streambed of rounded, polished stones. We admired the rugged beauty of the landscape which is occasionally marred by outbreaks of blackberries, the boats gliding with an ease that belied the harshness of the country. A bushwalker



Above, there is plenty of opportunity to practise the Eskimo roll on the Goodradigbee River.

would be reduced to a slow, restricted scramble here.

Again the river began to narrow. A series of grade-three rapids forewarned of the entrance to the second gorge. The difficult section soon commenced. One of our party broadsided on to a large jutting rock and was forced under by the current. Unable to recover, he was swept downstream until both he and his kayak were dragged into a small black eddy, just above a long grade-four rapid. The boat wasn't damaged and the paddler warmed himself on the sunlit side of the gorge. The next kilometre certainly had our adrenalin pumping, with grade three-five rapids. Large waves repeatedly hindered the manoeuvring of our kayaks.

A small island marks the start of a large drop. The river churns down one side of the island, against a blank rock-face and through a series of slides, the last partially blocked by a huge semi-submerged boulder. The white water buffets then swirls round it. We gathered on a small bluff to watch the first paddler. Committing himself, he was drawn into the vortex and the cliff, but several desperate strokes allowed him to evade the rock. A cry of elation echoed over the roar of the river.

Downstream, another rapid has the obvious path blocked by a rock, the size

of a small truck. This necessitates a diagonal ferry-glide to the right-hand side, to emerge down an obscured chute. There was a second spin here, resulting in a badly holed boat. We continued for 500 metres, but its hull was leaking severely. The river had swung close to a fire track, a steep 115 metres above; the paddler with the damaged boat decided to take this strenuous exit.

Rapid followed rapid for the next two and a half kilometres, including a portage round a nasty sliding drop which will probably prove 'shootable' in the future. It pays to show some caution on 'first' trips, adopting a more adventurous approach when you have a thorough knowledge of a river. Lunch was taken amidst a jumble of boulders, boats dragged high and dry. A large driftwood fire heated our bodies, for although clad in warm protective clothing, we were soaked to the skin and cooled off quickly when we stopped. The break, with rapids reverberating in the background, allowed us not only to appreciate the river but to assess our situation. The Aboriginal meaning of Goodradigbee, water falling over rock, remains with me. We repacked our waterproof gear and departed.

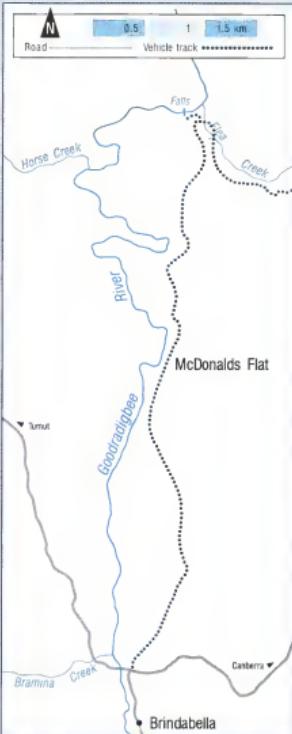
Even in the short intervening pools between rapids, the river moves deceptively. A rapid dropped from view. On inspection we saw a nasty 90° bend, with water plummeting in one direction

then being irresistibly diverted against its will into a winding, but clear, chute. We braced hard as we were propelled into the bend, and the rapid was successfully negotiated by the entire group. Immediately below, near the confluence with Horse Creek (emerging as a waterfall on the left-hand side), the Goodradigbee tumbles down a three metre slide into a boiling stopper. All went well for the first two paddlers, the stopper proving uneventful, but the third capsized. Luckily, it is some distance before the river picks up pace. This spectacular drop proved to be the highlight of the trip.

Our rate of progress increased as we glided the kayaks through grade-three and grade-four rapids. We eased over another three metre fall with such finesse as to bring roars of laughter from the whole party.

A further fall proved more difficult, requiring the kayaks to be portaged over enormous boulders. But we were aware that this drop is only a short distance from Flea Creek and arrived at our campsite, as the light began to fade, to find our luckless canoeing partner awaiting us and our tale of success. ▲

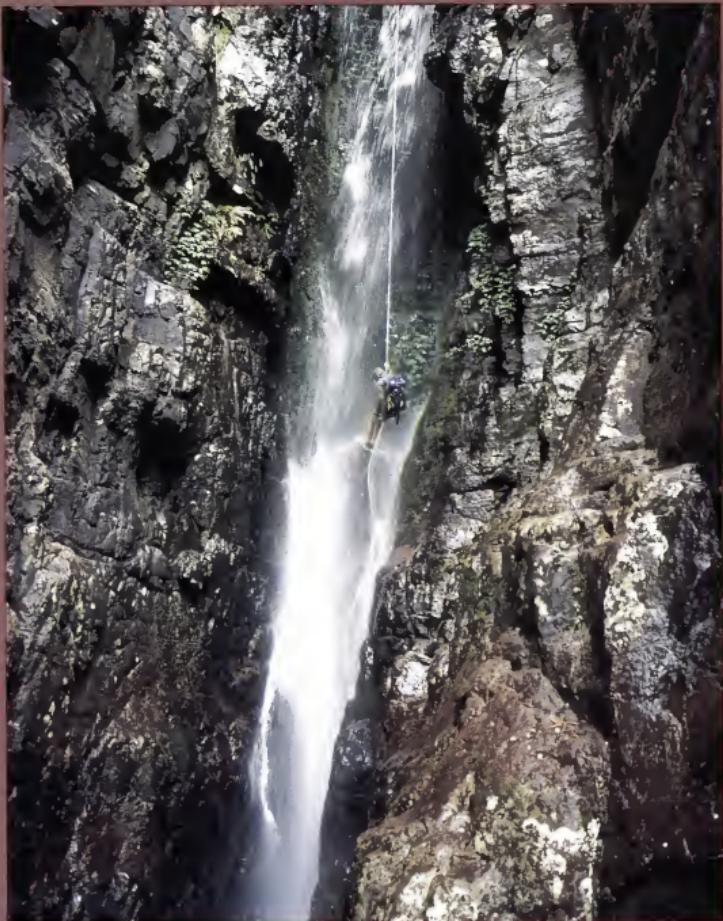
Goodradigbee River



Wild Canyoning

DANAE DAYS AND COLD NIGHTS

An epic descent of a classic Blue Mountains canyon,
with *Tim Acker*





▲ 'YEAH, BUT WHAT IF IT RAINS?'

'I dunno; hopefully it won't.'

A long pause, and the three of us glanced at each other and the sky. 'But isn't it too late?' Another negative comment passed between us.

'Well, look, if we...hmm,' another voice trailed off into indecision.

The debate wandered, sometimes positively, sometimes negatively; fatalist observations and optimistic statements. In between, we were packing and organizing anyway.

'Will we need this rope...what about food?'

For some reason, the possibility of total disaster didn't stop us preparing. There was something about the chance of doing the famous Danae Canyon in the Blue Mountains, New

Above, waiting to take the plunge on the third abseil, the start of 'the real Danae Brook'. Right, lost in pounding water near the foot of the Waterfall Abseil. Tim Acker. Previous page, another view of the third abseil. David Noble

South Wales, that blocked normal reasoning. Taking an objective view, we should have given up, sat around a warm fire and congratulated ourselves on our wise decision; but we didn't. We ignored the six-hour epic drive from Canberra; the gravel roads, steep hills and wrong turns making us feel dizzy, knowing we should have reached our destination, but the road continuing its winding. Even the 4 am arrival and 7 am jangling of an alarm clock did not convince us otherwise. Sputtering, static-filled radio weather-reports warned of scattered showers; in the sky above, a thin, even

coating of clouds blocked out the sun.

It was 9.30 am before we were packed. Everything was ready except the decision to go.

We reasoned, 'Look, we'll walk to the top of the canyon and if the weather has turned bad by then, we'll go back'. It seemed logical. We began following the track, not admitting to each other that only a full-scale rain storm would stop us. The prospect scared and thrilled me. My thoughts ranged from the reality of doing Danae (which had reached legendary proportions in my mind) to the challenge of deciding whether to go down or to return. Other ideas crowded in; some words I had read about the canyon—a fierce proposition, 'serious undertaking'—words which inspire rather than warn. And there were the fatalistic comments made by the three of us; jokingly said, seriously meant.

Danae Brook—the name conjures images of ferocity and danger, a frontier land of canyons, narrow slots, plummeting waterfalls, numb water, total seclusion and dark walls screaming up to disappear into the indistinguishable top miles above. On a map it is an insignificant blue streak, with some compressed contours trying to convey the steepness as it runs its very short course from a swamp to the Kanangra River, near the final bends on the road to Kanangra Walls in the southern Blue Mountains.



The bush around us is somehow secure, green and fresh, and walking through it pushes back visions of possible disaster. We branch off the fire track, sarcasm and pessimism still flying, a kilometre or so from the Brook.

The bush closes in. Hideous, whip-like flicks at our heads and torsos; shrubs of every conceivable spiky and scratchy variety shred our legs as our way twists through. Curses fly and conversation dies.

Scrambling along a log, we pop out into the creek—a few quiet pools and the gurgling of slow-moving water in-between. This is supposed to turn into something vicious? Our spirits lift. We boulder-hop, testing the water occasionally, quickly refracting any limb unfortunate enough to enter the innocuous-looking, but cold, stream.

Finally the end is reached. The creek turns vertical. This is it. Decision time. It hasn't rained, so why not? The overcast sky hasn't changed. And we've already come this far. Let's go.

An early lunch offsets the shivering from a cold breeze that occasionally blows from the north. Everybody's smiling as the rope is slung round the first tree, and the three of us abseil quickly. The canyon is still quite open. Shrubs line the sides, and the waterfalls don't sound very ferocious. It'll be fine, we tell ourselves. The second abseil is another short one, slimy at the bottom,

but for some reason it's warmer here. Now we discover the unique feature of Danae Brook; much of the canyon is hidden—the creek has worn its path down a deep, narrow and black slot, which is frightening to contemplate. Tonnes of boulders and soil have fallen in over the years, jamming the narrower sections of the canyon, so that what we end up standing on is actually a bridge—way beneath is the hollow slash where the creek flows. At the top of the third abseil we can walk back almost to the waterfall. Above is the 15 metre waterfall, and beneath the slippery log we stand on, disappearing into the invisible blackness, is another 20 or 30 metres of waterfall. We retreat to our boulder bridge and start the third abseil. Our feet, ropes and concentration get caught on the two obnoxious chockstones.

The dangers of Danae become obvious at the next abseil—down a vertical canyon. The creek goes down and down, pausing only briefly in pools before disappearing over another edge in a swirl of mist and rushing water. All this held tightly between walls so black and overbearing that they are scary to look at. Always down we go, dodging the freezing water, doing anything to avoid getting wet.

The top of the next abseil, the largest so far, is the famous Waterfall Abseil, although we don't know this yet. The access to the belay point is dicey; hand-lines and slippery boulders are all that keep us from sliding in a delicate arc over the next waterfall.

'I'll go first, I want to get some pictures', I tell the other two. The abseil starts viciously—a knife edge, below which is space and cold waterfall. I am half soaked on the first few metres, but don't notice as I try to concentrate on what is below. The rope dangles almost straight down, at times lost in the free-flowing waterfall. As I near the bottom, the walls narrow and my path becomes the same as that of the water. I am lost, my senses overloaded; immersed in the waterfall. The cold stops

feeling, the pounding water makes it impossible to see and the noise reverberates so loudly I can't hear myself yell in fright and exhilaration...blind abseiling...my feet touch what feels like solid ground and I scramble free of the water. I can't believe it. I'm alive.

Yelling 'Off rope' is difficult, and trying to warn the other two is impossible. They discover it for themselves, emerging with stunned looks on their faces. We find a wedge of sunlight and huddle until it disappears over the edge of the next abseil, our faces frozen in a half smile, half grimace. In the dim light, it's hard to tell if any of us is turning blue.

The abseils follow rapidly. Danae Brook isn't happy unless it is falling down. One abseil in particular thrills us—the creek has once again disappeared under its roof of boulders and we reach a drop, but there is no belay point. Hunting around we find a dark hole, half hidden under a big boulder. A thin, toey ledge directly above this hole is where we clip on. The abseil is dry, but very dark and very narrow. We almost have to abseil on our knees, it's so tight. Another abseil, the Slippery Log Abseil (which has a log jammed at the bottom), provides no foot traction and plenty of hassles as we slip and slam to the bottom.

Short drops, scrambling, a few excruciating swims, and the creek disappears underground again. We have left the canyon behind. In front is a large chute crammed with a huge variety of boulders; house-sized, fist-sized—it's a never-ending descent over rocks. A glance up at the widening but almost topless walls confirms where they have come from.

One last abseil greets us. Thankfully it's a dry one, and beyond is more boulder-hopping. Here, due to a misunderstanding, we become separated. I look for the other two downstream and they look for me upstream—a few hours of feet-mangling boulder-hopping go wasted.

The chances of doing Danae in a day are disappearing fast. Desperate for a rest, we light a fire and eat at the junction of Danae Brook and Kanangra Creek. By the time we finish, it's dark—totally dark—with no moon, no stars, nothing. Even after sitting in the dark for a while, we can't see more than a few centimetres. It's almost subterranean. Using matches, we gather enough firewood and curl up around our small blaze. With wet socks, shorts, jumpers and shoes for a pillow, stinging nettles and grass for a bed and the fire for warmth, we sleep. We wake when it gets too cold, poke the fire and sleep some more. It begins raining, and our emergency garbage bags become blankets.

In the hazy light of a wet dawn we begin the ascent to Kanangra Walls. The

steepness and lack of real food are exhausting, and on reaching the top we lie around, panting in disbelief that we are actually there.

It is still five or six kilometres to the car. Scrub and heath gouge cold skin, and when the rain begins falling heavily, we almost laugh. The only way to avoid hypothermia is to keep walking, but

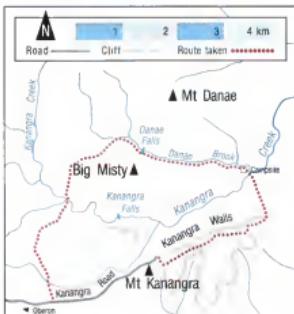


walking gives us time to think about food, dry clothing...the track seems to wind endlessly. The mist becomes so thick that we can barely make out the bush around. All the time the rain is hammering down and we're getting colder.

Our car comes into view so suddenly it's hard to believe. Slithering and sliding in the mud, we heave ourselves out of our clothes and into dry jumpers, long johns, beanies...anything dry. We exchange the food bag for the wet-gear bag. Closing the doors and listening to rain on the car, we pull out a spoon and the family-size jar of Nutella—a few helpings each and our mouths are clagged so we can't speak, but as the chocolate flavour seeps through, we smile at each other. We've just finished Danae Brook. ▲

Tim Ackers describes himself as a 21-year-old Canberra inmate who fantasises about being a well-travelled photo-journalist but who currently works and studies photography. In his 'non-existent spare time' he indulges in bodily damage: ski touring, climbing and canyoning.

Danae Brook





Glenn Robbins

Above, Giles Bradbury extended on *Watch This Space* (grade 26). *Right*, Ant Prehn hammering it up on *Beef and Chips* (26). Both climbs are on the Sydney Sea Cliffs, New South Wales.





WILD



Chris Paster at grips with Masada (grade 30), Mt Arapiles, Victoria. Glenn Robbins

Solo ON THE WESTERN

Walking the little-known western Snowy Mountains, by Trevor Lewis

'I am the cat who walks alone, and all places are alike to me.' Rudyard Kipling, Just So Stories

▲ ONLY AT THE WESTERN EDGE, WHERE the highest summits fall a vertical mile into the Geehi valley, do the Snowy Mountains aspire to alpine grandeur.

Many have driven to Olsens Look-out to gape at Australia's most spectacular mountain view. Thousands tread the path to Townsend, Twynam and Carruthers Peak to look down into that deepest valley. But not many walk the paths between the Geehi valley and the summits. The Western Faces offer uncompromising walking country, and the chance to be completely on your own.

I first went bushwalking without companions at the end of a miserable December. I was just out of school, and facing the real world of employment. I'd received many knock-backs and been offered a couple of starts, which had promptly been followed by the sack. But if I couldn't make it in the city, I could certainly make it in the bush, or so I told myself, over-compensating. I packed my rucksack, put on my walking shoes and set off.

I hitch-hiked to Charlottes Pass in the Snowy Mountains, arriving on a glorious sunny day, and walked up past Blue Lake, on to the summit of Mt Twynam. I'd thought of going to Albina Hut that night, and basing myself there, but an impulse side-tracked me on to Twynam West Spur. I left my pack at the saddle where the spur branches from the Main Range and walked out along its great bald spine, marvelling at all the space around and below. I rested at the point where the spur starts its long fall into the Geehi valley, dangling my feet over Watsons Crags. I caught a glimpse of sunshine playing on the Geehi's waters in the green forest depths of the canyon.

It seemed magic to me then, and still does—a slice of wilderness as raw as I could want. Suddenly, I wanted to



Above, Watsons Crags. Right, Watsons Gorge Creek is not a particularly hospitable place. Adrian Davey

discover it properly; and I had the freedom to do so. I was on my own. A new plan quickly formed. I'd descend Watsons Crags Spur to the Geehi River, and follow the river all the way down to Geehi Flats.

I hurried back to the saddle and retrieved my pack. I walked to that last high point and started descending. It was exciting but exhausting, and took the rest of a long afternoon. Sometimes it got too sheer for walking, and the rock scrambling lent an extra thrill and gave relief from ploughing through the vegetation, which grew tougher and more prolific as I descended. And it

changed, from familiar sub-alpine scrub and dwarf snow gums to a tangled and very wet sclerophyll forest.

It was late in the afternoon when I blundered off the line of the ridge where it fans out about 300 metres above the river. My map showed a track down this lower part of the spur, but I hadn't found a trace of it. I was being drawn into a gully, but didn't fancy walking back uphill to find a better route. I'd reach the Geehi sooner or later, as long as I kept on heading downhill.

It was heavy going: wading through tree-ferns, brambles and stinging nettles and treading vertical slopes of damp humus-smelling earth, which caved in under the footstep. High above the tall tree-tops, a giant sandstone cliff glowed

FACES



sullen, overcast sky. I quickly packed up and resumed the slithery descent. I could hear big water shouting not far below me. Finally, I tumbled out of the bush and into a boulder-choked river bed—the Geehi at last... I was wrong. A short way down-valley the river plunged over a waterfall. It took a vertical scrub-bash to get past. Round the next bend a bigger river came into view—the Geehi. I had stumbled into the lower reaches of Watsons Gorge Creek.

On the banks of the Geehi, I shed pack and clothes and dived into the clear, deep water. Afterwards I lit a fire on a boulder and cooked the dinner I'd missed the previous night. Flood driftwood was scattered plentifully along the river banks and proved much more fire-worthy than the damp stuff I'd tried to kindle. Drizzle started falling as I packed up. I might have heeded the warning of that driftwood, but I was still drawn by adventure. Misty rain only added to the appealing wildness of the scene. But the going was rough—boulder-hopping and scrub bashing. Now and then I walked in the river itself, where it was shallow, for relief from the complication of finding a route along its banks.

The rain turned to a steady downpour. After what seemed a long time, I came to a large tributary. I stopped to read the map—Lady Northcote's Canyon. It couldn't be anything else. I was surprised I had taken so long to cover such a small distance. I'd counted on walking all the way to Geehi by that night.

Lady Northcote's waters were deep and flowing powerfully, and it took all my concentration to cross in one piece. At this point I could have opted out: crossed the Geehi and slogged up the big hill to Olsens Look-out, the road and the chance of hitch-hiking. But I chose to stay with the river.

I ploughed on down the canyon in teeming rain. I didn't notice how fast the water was rising. Soon it was too dangerous to wade, even close to the bank. And I was on the south side of the river, with no escape except a 1,500 metre climb up Townsend Spur. Who'd be fool enough to try in this weather? I was committed to following the river. The water had swelled to fill any flat space in the valley floor and the only way was to sidle the slopes above. It made for slow

yellow and orange in the far-western sunshine; the gully was already deep in shadow. It was time to give up trying to reach the river and to look for a place to bivouac. It was too much to expect a campsite in such terrain and besides, I wasn't carrying a tent. I'd thought, why not take a chance? I would be out only a couple of nights and there were plenty of huts around—but none where I was now headed. I found a flat space big enough to lie down and spread out my bivvy bag and sleeping bag. Then I tried to kindle a fire. I tried for a long time. All the dead wood I could find was too wet and rotten. Finally I gave up, had some cold food and went to bed.

I opened my eyes in the morning and looked through tangled branches at a

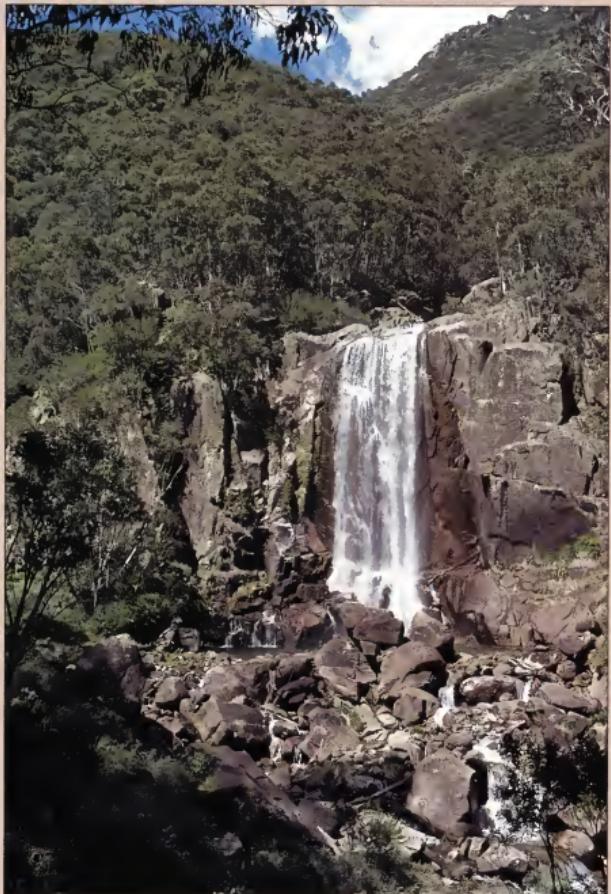
progress: climbing, descending, wrestling with sodden vegetation.

In the gloomy weather I lost sense of time, and evening caught me by surprise. It was still raining. I found a tiny flat spot carpeted with ferns and climbed into my sleeping bag inside my bivvy bag. For about 15 minutes I thought it would work. Then I felt a pool of water forming where my hip-bone rested on the ground. The bag was waterproof alright, but that meant any water which got in couldn't get out. And it was filling



rapidly. My sleeping bag became a sponge, soaking up water. I closed my eyes and tried to ignore it. If I dreamt, it was of swimming.

In the morning, it was still raining heavily. The river was huge, deafening, its turbulent waters discoloured by sediment. I thought I saw a tree trunk whirling past. I raised myself from my water bed and wrung out my sleeping bag. It still weighed three times what it should. I hoisted a leaden pack on to my shoulders and set out. Determination turned to desperation. I had to get out of there. I was already overdue, with many rugged kilometres ahead of me.



Above falls on Lady Northcotes Creek. *Right*, the Western Faces from Olsens Look-out. Glenn Tempest

The terrain didn't become any easier, but during the morning the rain relented and sun shone through a hole in the cloud. I paused. I was tired out, wet through. I needed a fire. I grabbed some dead wood and made a pile of it. Then I delved into my pack for matches. They were wet, useless. I tried time and again. Nothing happened. I allowed myself a good cry. I wept, I screamed, I threw a tantrum.

Then I continued walking. In the afternoon I climbed a small ridge and looked out to where the canyon's V-shape finally opens on to broad river flats. I thought I'd reached my nirvana, but the river wasn't to let me off so easily. Those abandoned grazing lands were overrun by hectares of blackberries. Every clear lead I tried to follow took me

to a dead end. I had no choice but to plunge into the thick of it, progress painfully achieved by trampling down the canes, laboriously clearing a path. I could hear traffic on the Alpine Way—so near and yet so far...One last obstacle remained. The Swampy Plains river was also in spate. But I was desperate to get across.

It was a strange feeling to reach the highway, a ribbon of earth winding through tall timber. It was also a strange feeling to be walking on ground that didn't resist my every footstep. Afternoon had shaded into evening. It was unusually chilly for the altitude and time of year. The last of the cloud was dissipating, revealing bare mountain tops high above, dusted with new-fallen snow.

Somehow I'd had the presence of mind to keep my spare clothes securely plastic-bagged and dry. I put on long

pants and a wool shirt, and it wasn't long before I managed to hitch a ride into Jindabyne. It was New Year's Eve, 1971.

▲
Fifteen years later, I walked down the Pinnacle fire track and I looked on the same mountain panorama—Townsend Spur's jagged spine, the huge bulk of Watsons Crags and the wedge shape of the Sentinel, propped in the V of Lady Northcotes Canyon. The mountains hadn't changed, but I'd learnt a bit along the way. I was still addicted to solo walking, but less inclined to take risks for the hell of it. Not less adventurous, but more cunning.

It was my fifth day on the track. I'd headed north from Guthega, taking in Leaning Rock Falls and Dicky Coopers Bogong, crossed the upper Geehi valley and looped back along the Grey Mare Range. I'd planned to finish my trip climbing one of the western spurs and crossing the Main Range to Thredbo. But doubts were nagging. I was still tired from the previous day's scrub bashing, I didn't have enough food and my bad knee was creaking like a rusty hinge. Yet I feared the dissatisfaction I'd have to live with if I didn't complete my trip in the style I'd intended.

I reached the Geehi Dam Road a couple of kilometres from Olsens Look-out. I made a deal with myself: I'd walk to Olsens, and if I managed to hitch a ride along the way I'd end my trip there and then. Otherwise, I'd keep going.

The only car which passed was headed in the wrong direction. My mind was already made up. Just after the Olsens Look-out turn-off, I plunged into the bush.

The old Snowy Mountains Authority road into the canyon has been thoroughly reclaimed by nature; it is overgrown and caved in by landslides. Only a tiny cairn marks the beginning of an indistinct track down to the river. A lyre-bird scuttled away as I pushed through the undergrowth.

The river which had terrorized me all those years earlier was knee-deep and flowing lazily, but the water was very cold. I stripped and took a plunge, then spread myself, lizard-like, on the warm rocks. There used to be a suspension bridge here, and an SMA works camp, which was used in the early stages of building the West Geehi Aqueduct. Not much remains: scraps of corrugated iron rusting away and building materials overgrown with moss. I'd planned to camp here, but the only tentable space near the river was hemmed in by dense vegetation, damp and oppressive. So I shouldered my pack and started climbing, tracing the rough track which I hadn't found on my first foray into the area. The men who built the Snowy Mountains Scheme drove teams of pack-horses up here, but it's hard to imagine now. The track keeps vanishing and you have to forge ahead, following

the vaguest of clues—an old blaze here, a sawn-off tree-stump there. Still, any track is better than no track in such topsy-turvy terrain. I carried on until I reached a slight levelling-off on the ridge—the site of another outpost of the Snowy Scheme ('Watsons Crags Camp' on the old Geehi map), the remains of which are scattered around in the scrub.

I found a small water hole. The water was brackish and discoloured but potable. I found a level space just big enough for my tent and cooked dinner watching the sun set over the western foothills.

In the morning the tiredness of the day before was still with me, so I dismissed the idea of heading straight up Watsons Crags and settled for an easy morning's walk to Canyon Camp. I'd climb Townsend Spur tomorrow.

The track from Siren Song Creek to Canyon Camp is easier to follow than the connecting track from Olsens Look-out, although still vague in places. It gave a delightful walk, yo-yoing in and out of small gullies, past cliffs, waterfalls and cascades, with many glimpses of the snowdrift-dappled summits soaring high above. The track ends where the aqueduct pipeline cuts a swathe through forest before vanishing uphill into the maw of the Watsons Crags tunnel. The only campsites in the canyon are man-made; the bulldozed flat space beside the pipeline is grassed-over and big enough to take a tent. Elsewhere the ground is too steep, too rocky or too vegetated, or all three.

Canyon Camp Hut must be the least-visited hut in the Snowy Mountains. Mine was the first November entry for that year in the log-book. There had been one in October, and the one before that was May. The log-book makes interesting reading, with many tales of suffering and endurance:

'We left Carruthers Peak at 12.30—took 24 hours to reach this hut.'

'Horrendous scrub bash...'

'Camped half-way up a tree in Lady Northcotes Canyon...'

'...would not wish this route on my worst enemy.'

I woke very early, ready for the dash to the top. But the prospects didn't look good. The summits were buried in heavy cloud. It was chilly down here in the canyon, and that meant it would be freezing on the heights. (It had snowed on me crossing the Grey Mare Range, two days before.) A small voice said: 'Don't risk it, play safe. Go back down the track to Olsens and you can hitch-hike home from there. What are you trying to prove anyway? You don't need to climb that hulk of a mountain.'

I pushed such thoughts aside and got ready to go.

A long scree slope provides the key to the first stage of the climb. A scrub-free staircase of broken rock sweeps up for 300 metres from the boulder-choked river bed, steep enough to need hands as well as feet to climb. I tackled it with aplomb. My lazy day had paid off; I had energy to spare. I made it to the saddle on the ridge-top barely out of breath. And

what a ridge-top. It is a narrow rocky spine with a long steep drop on either side. I gazed at sunshine on the western foothills. Above and beyond the dark forest jumble of the Geehi valley I caught a glimpse of Jagungal's snow-streaked flanks, its summit snagging the cloud.

But I wasn't to gaze at views for very much longer. The cloud line was

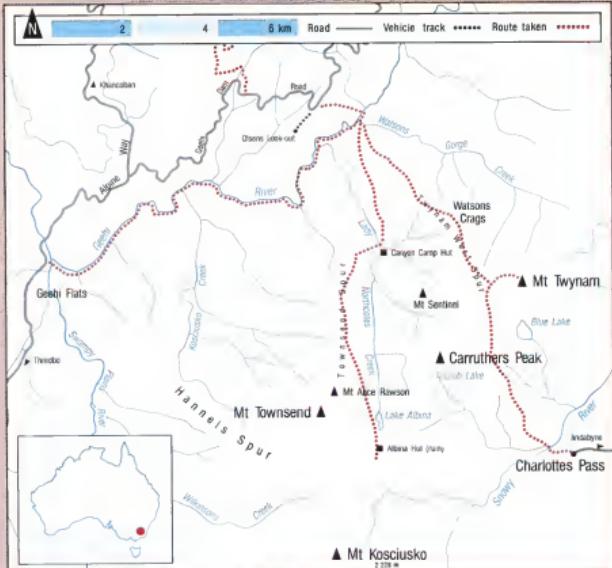


creeping lower. The mountain I was climbing disappeared. I was travelling blind, feeling my way. Now and then I paused for breath and glanced at the empty space beneath my feet. I might have been an eagle, perched on the edge of the sky. I passed the tree line. After a long haul the steep, rocky, scrub-clinging ground gave way to alpine meadow. I judged I'd reached the saddle below Mt Alice Rawson. There was no point in climbing all the way to the top in such weather, so I veered off the ridge line, aiming for Lake Albina.

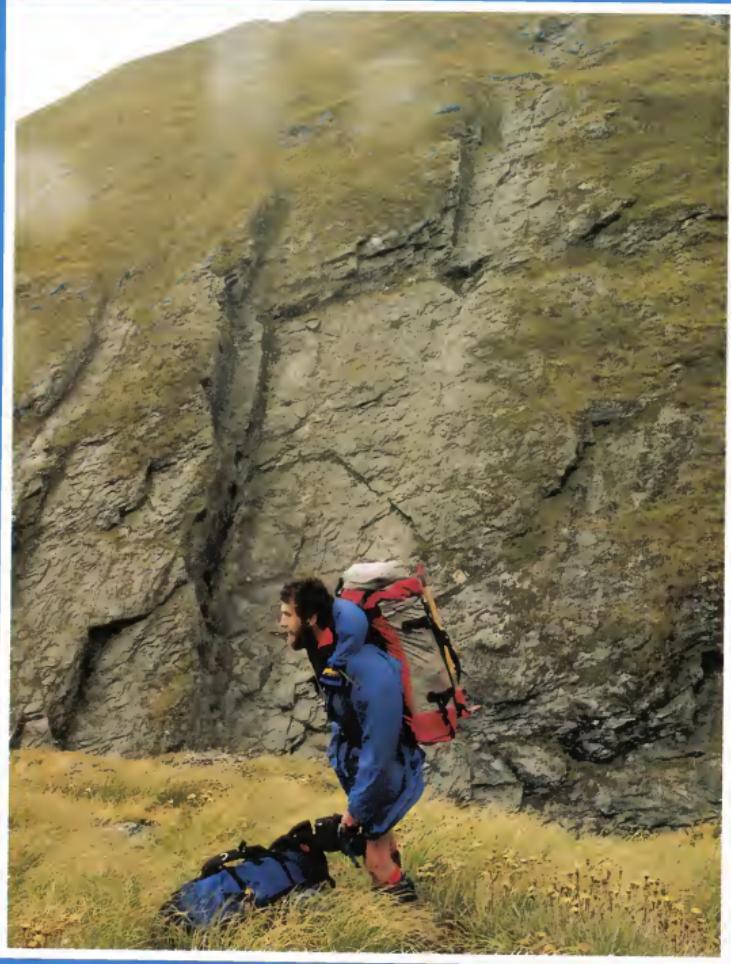
The going became steep and awkward. The roar of water in Lady Northcotes Canyon sounded uncomfortably close. Had I left the ridge too soon? A westerly wind, stirring the cloud, raised visibility just enough to get my bearings. A long trudge across a grey desolation of boulder fields, tundra scrub and rushing streams led me to a promontory overlooking Lake Albina. Crumbling snow-drifts edged the deep blue waters, so cold and uninviting. I'd been on the move for over five hours. I stopped for lunch, but it was too bleak to make it a long one. I dressed for winter: gloves, beanie, wool shirt and pants, long socks. Sago snow rattled on my parka hood as I walked uphill, past the foison ruins of Albina Hut.

Sunshine beamed on me as I crossed the saddle of Northcote Pass. Cloud, banked up on the Western Faces, hadn't spilled on to the eastern side of the range. Kosciusko's long snow-drift curved upward under a clear sky. It was a landscape just waking from winter, sombre with bleached snow grass and brown-tinged shrubbery. The vast vista of ranges to the east, Australia's highest mountains, was dappled with cloud shadow. Still enough mystery, 15 years later. ▲

Western Snowy Mountains



Trevor Lewis (see Contributors in Wild no 1) lives in Canberra where he has worked in a variety of jobs. He is a keen winter who has written of his walking experiences in Australia, New Zealand and Nepal.



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Mt Wellington Walks

Beautiful bushwalks at Hobart's doorstep, with *Stephen Bunton*

▲ MT WELLINGTON IS THE CLOSEST wilderness area to an Australian capital city. It stands as a majestic backdrop to the beautiful port city of Hobart and features prominently in the photographs and postcards which promote the capital of the Holiday Isle. Few visitors to the State escape without experiencing the view from its 1,271 metre summit. For residents, it holds a special importance. Visible from almost all parts of the city, the mountain is a tangible link with Tasmania's south-west wilderness. For those outdoor enthusiasts imprisoned in town going about their weekly work, it's a source of inspiration.

Maps. Mt Wellington lies in a conspicuous blank spot west of Hobart on the Tasmap *Derwent 1 : 100,000* sheet. The area around the summit and the eastern slopes is unfortunately a little cluttered with detail, including the positions of those horrible TV towers, an eyesore in reality as well as on the map. It is covered most thoroughly by the *Mt Wellington Walk Map*, a 1 : 15,000 sheet produced by the Tasmanian Department of Lands, Parks and Wildlife, which also includes a useful larger-scale day-walk map of the Ferntree area. For walks on the rest of the Wellington Range, the Tasmap 1 : 25,000 series sheets of *Collinsvale, Hobart* and *Longley* are excellent.

Access. Walking tracks lead off from the Hobart suburbs of Ferntree, South Hobart, Lenah Valley and Glenorchy. From Ferntree these tracks lead up to the Springs, where numerous other tracks begin. Tracks from South Hobart and Lenah Valley intersect the Pinnacle Road beyond the Springs. Further up the Pinnacle Road is the Climbers Track which ascends directly to the Organ Pipes. There is an Organ Pipes Track which begins at a picnic shelter called the Chalet. The Collins Bonnet Track starts from Big Bend. The Tom Thumb Track rises from Glenorchy. The summit is the start or terminus of a couple of tracks, depending on which way you choose to walk. South of Ferntree along Huon Road is the hamlet of Neika, with access to the Pipeline Track, and south of this is Longley, where the Betts Hill fire track begins. Collins Bonnet can also be reached from Collinsvale, north of Hobart, and from the settlement of Mountain River in the south.

The walks. Most of the walks described are considered day walks and there is no reference to campsites. All directions and times are given for ascending the mountain. The tracks closest to civilization are particularly well signposted although it is still prudent to carry a map, since in some cases the profusion of tracks leads to confusion.

From Ferntree

Rivulet Track 30 minutes to O'Grady's Falls. The track begins at a picnic area just below bus stop 28 on Strickland Avenue and



Above, dawn on the Organ Pipes, Mt Wellington. All photos Grant Dixon

ascends the slopes of the gully containing the upper reaches of Hobart Rivulet. It ends at the O'Grady's Falls Track 100 metres from the falls.

Woods Track 15 minutes to the Pinnacle Road

This narrow track climbs through young sapling growth and cutting grass, which thankfully doesn't impose over the track. It is

one of the many tracks which allows good bird-watching as flocks of honey-eaters fly from tree to tree.

Fingerpost Track 60 minutes to the Springs

The uninvitingly steep four-wheel-drive start to this track can be avoided by turning right along Curtis Avenue and following the fire track up to the junction with the O'Grady's Falls Track. This fire track is actually the giant swathe of a fire-break which, though not particularly aesthetic itself, does offer great

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views of the Organ Pipes. At the intersection of the four-wheel-drive track is a confusing signpost. The real Fingerpost Track isn't marked and it is just as easy to follow the route to the Springs by Radfords Track. For the most part, Fingerpost Track is steep and narrow and, like Woods Track, is excellent for bird-watching because you can easily sneak up on the myriad of honey-eaters, dusky robins and other little brown birds whose speed defies identification.

O'Grady's Falls Track 15 minutes to the falls

This is the continuation of the fire-break until just before the falls, where the track enters dense regrowth, and the sound of running water heralds the appearance of a pretty little waterfall.

Radfords Track 40 minutes to the Springs

The track leaves the Bracken Lane fire track and heads gently uphill as a narrow bunched track to the Pinnacle Road. Its continuation is a steep fire track which curves round the damp southern side of the spur. A monument to George Radford is erected at the point where he drew his last breath whilst competing in the 1905 Pinnacle race. This marks the junction with the Fern Glade Track. Radfords Track then climbs even more steeply over cobbles, passing the junctions with Middle Track and Reids Track before levelling out to rendezvous with civilization at the Springs.

Fern Glade Track 40 minutes to Rocky Whelans Cave

The track starts at a little picnic area just uphill from bus stop 26, at the intersection of the Pinnacle Road and Huon Road. It ascends as a cool, shady corridor rising steeply to intersect Radfords Track. Beyond, it sides the mountain as a fire track. Fingerpost Track crosses it shortly before the turn-off up to the shallow sandstone overhang of Rocky Whelans Cave.

Middle Track, Reids Track, Silver Falls Track 30 minutes to the Springs

These tracks begin opposite the Ferntree Tavern at bus stop 27. The more direct route to Silver Falls is the start of the Pipeline Track, which can be followed along a level track south to Neika, through an avenue of trees behind various mountain residences.

Schoobridge Track 20 minutes to Sphinx Rock

This well-defined track begins on one of the lower bends of the Pinnacle Road and passes through towering eucalypts with a dense understorey. A Fire Department sign denotes an enormous tree which was struck by lightning and sounds a warning to the more obvious fire danger—man. Beyond, a path leads to the right to circumnavigate the interesting Octopus Tree. The level track continues until its junction with the steep track up to the sandstone overhangs of Sphinx Rock.

From South Hobart

Myrtle Gully Track one hour to Junction Cabin

This track starts from the top of Old Farm Road, behind the Cascade Brewery. It follows the cool wooded valley of Guy Fawkes Rivulet, ignoring the plethora of fire tracks in the area.

From the Springs

Ice House Track, Zigzag Track two hours to the Pinnacle

These are the premier tracks, climbing directly to the top of Mt Wellington. The Ice House Track is the less distinct and a little rougher underfoot. It climbs steeply from the Springs through lovely forest to near the summit of South Wellington, where the remains of a number of ice works can be found. The track continues over the ridge and

Miles Track, Wellington Falls Track seven hours to Ferntree by the Pipeline Track

This track traverses the mountain to the south, ascending slightly as it rounds the spur leading down to Neika. A signpost marks the point where a track leads out to Snake Plains and down to the Pipeline Track. The track slowly descends, passing Disappearing Tarn



Above, the ranges of Tasmania's South-west are visible from the summit plateau of Mt Wellington.

then north across the windswept plateau to the summit, where the Zigzag Track joins it.

The Zigzag Track, by way of contrast, traverses first then climbs steeply to the summit. It shares the same route as the Organ Pipes Track before branching uphill. At lower altitudes it is the more open of the two tracks leading to the Pinnacle. It is easier underfoot, providing great views of the Organ Pipes, and is the more popular. Together, these tracks offer a pleasant round-trip in either direction.

Organ Pipes Track two hours to the Chalet

This well-made track traverses beneath the awesome dolerite columns which are the main feature on the east face of Mt Wellington. Observant walkers may notice climbers at play on these seemingly overhanging cliffs. Beyond the cliffs the track climbs gently round the corner and down to the shelter shed on the road.

Climbers Track 15 minutes to the cliff

From a small car-park denoted by a sign outlining the mountain's geological history, this track scrambles steeply over boulders to join the Organ Pipes Track. The continuation of the track is immediately opposite and climbs through a narrow corridor of ti-tree shrubs to the base of the cliffs. The track continues round to the left and into the imposing Amphitheatre. Alternatively, it's possible to traverse right and go up an indistinct scrambling route to the summit car-park.

to Wellington Falls. It can be done in reverse from Neika to Wellington Falls and then up to the Springs, or even up the Snake Plains track which is more direct. Again, the low altitude link is the Pipeline Track from Ferntree to Neika which traverses behind private houses.

From Big Bend

Collins Bonnet Track six hours return

The route to Collins Bonnet follows a rocky fire track which rises over a small saddle before descending steeply on the western side. The fire track is followed until a cairn and sapling marker indicate the turn-off on the left. Alternatively, the fire track can be followed to its junction with the more indistinct Thark Ridge fire track. Continuing along the original fire track is the route to Tom Thumb and the junction with the Tom Thumb Track. The point where the walking track crosses the Thark Ridge fire track is also clearly marked. This track then continues through low eucalypt scrub, beyond a few toppled saplings and out on to a button grass plain. Once in the trees again, the track follows dolerite cobbles until it meets the ridge and skirts the northern slopes of Mt Connection and the Lectern. The pretty green farmlands of Collinsvale can be seen to the north. A steep descent through taller trees on the western end of the Lectern is punctuated by rock slabs offering glimpses of Huonville to the south, and beyond as far as Precipitous Bluff. The track then joins the Goat Hills Fire Track, which climbs steeply to crest the ridge where the walking track recommences. A short stroll across large

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rocks leads to the summit, from which it is possible to see the vast panorama of the peaks of the South-west.

From Lenah Valley

Lenah Valley Track two and a half hours to the Springs

The track begins from a picnic area 400 metres beyond the bus terminal at the Lady Franklin Gallery. After crossing New Town Creek there is a maze of fire tracks. Thankfully the best route, the gentlest climb, is well signposted. The track then sides across a sunny north-facing slope of open woodland. Dense, typically Tasmanian scrub fills a gully which rings to the sound of the impressive New Town Falls. The bunched walking track continues until it again meets a fire track which contours further round the hill before climbing steeply to Junction Cabin.

Beyond Junction Cabin the track climbs gradually and passes Lone Cabin. It then continues as a well-made path over scree slopes hidden beneath the scrub and the tall white skeletons of trees incinerated in the 1967 bushfire. The Shoobridge Track veers gently downhill, into live stands of tall gum trees, and the Lenah Valley Track becomes a corridor of ti-trees before it intersects the Pinnacle Road. Between these two is the Sphinx Rock Track.

Hunters Track one hour from Junction Cabin to the Chalet

This track ascends to the road steeply, for those who feel they haven't had sufficient exercise already.

Breakneck Track one hour from Pottery Road to Junction Cabin

The area is infested with fire tracks and can prove a navigational nightmare. It is probably simpler to climb the road which leads to the Hydro-Electric Commission reservoir and proceed from there. An alternate and more confusing route goes from Mt Stuart Look-out.

From Glenorchy

Tom Thumb Track three hours to the summit

The track begins at the end of Chapel Street and relentlessly follows a ridiculously steep fire track up the crest of a ridge, to its intersection with the Mt Hull fire track. Turning left at the junction, there is still a long climb to the conspicuous corner where the narrow walking track leads up the summit outcrop.

From Collinsvale

Myrtle Forest Track two hours to Collins Cap or Collins Bonnet

The track follows up beside Myrtle Forest Creek through lovely rain forest and a profusion of ferns. It then splits. To the left is the route to Collins Bonnet, and to the right it climbs steeply towards Collins Cap. The track to Collins Bonnet ascends through open gum forest which is replaced by heath where the track levels out on the plateau. It meets the Goat Hills fire track opposite an emergency shelter which is falling into a state of minor disrepair. (It is not marked on the map.) From the shelter it's a short stroll up the road to the summit walking track. To the right, the fire track drops over a small saddle and down

towards Trestle Mountain. Turning right at a junction, the fire track heads back towards Collins Cap and intersects that walking track below the final climb to the summit.

From Neika

Pipeline Track to Wellington Falls three hours return

Bus stop 33 is the terminus of the MTT Ferntree bus service. From here it is 1.2 kilometres to where the road skirts the ridge



Above: Mt Wellington, in its winter mantle of snow, floating above Hobart and the Derwent River.

at Watchcorns Hill. This is the start of the HEC pipeline maintenance road, which provides a most pleasant stroll to Wellington Falls. This track is very popular with joggers on summer evenings and looks across the valley to Cathedral Rock, towering above stands of ferns.

From Longley

Betts Hill Track to Cathedral Rock three hours return

Another fire track, it contours round the western slopes of North West Bay River before climbing notorious and ridiculously steep zigzags to the ridge-top on the shoulder of Cathedral Rock. The track to the summit branches off from here and rises through shady glades on the south side of the Pinnacle before emerging to intimidating views down the abrupt north-east face.

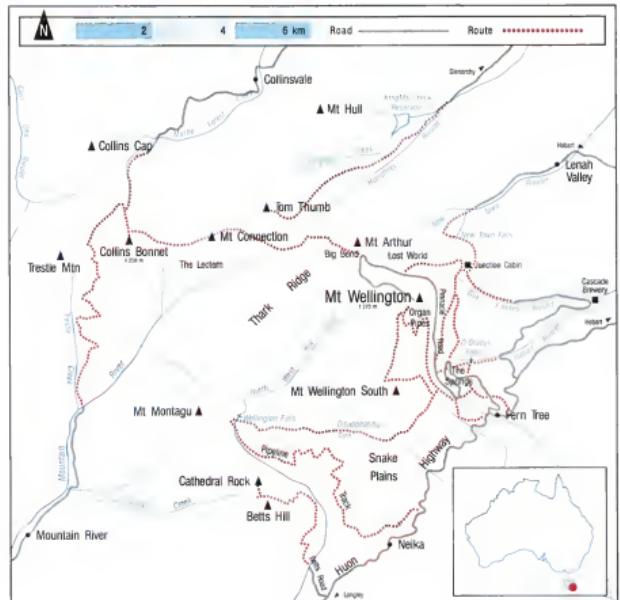
From Mountain River

Collins Bonnet Track three and a half hours to the summit

Again, a steep fire track which ascends through pleasant forest to the exposed plateau of the Wellington Range. After the initial climb the track contours north-west, past remnants of former small-scale sawmilling operations just off the road. The track crosses Trestle Creek before climbing steeply again, under the cliffs of Trestle Mountain. There is a junction with another fire track, but the route is obvious as it circles round Collins Bonnet on the north side and then past a dilapidated hut and on to the walking track turn-off, as mentioned above. This route would make a suitable first leg of a traverse of the mountain. A most pleasant day trip could be taken by being dropped off at Mountain River, climbing Collins Bonnet and then continuing on to Big Bend, from where it would be quite easy to hitch-hike back into Hobart. ▲

Stephen Bunton (see Contributors in Wildno 6) is Wild's Contributing Editor for caving. An experienced walker and climber, he has visited many parts of Australia and several overseas countries to pursue these interests.

Mt Wellington



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Waterproof Parkas

There's more to keeping dry than meets the eye, by *Warren McLaren*

Wild Gear Survey

▲ NOTHING DAMPENS ENTHUSIASM MORE than being soaked during a journey in the mountains or bush. Dismal attempts to dry sodden clothes around a camp fire are not moments quickly forgotten. Well-designed rainwear makes life drier and safer by keeping the dangerous trio of 'cold, wet and windy' at bay, thus helping to prevent hypothermia. Australasia is well endowed with manufacturers of high performance rainwear. Most of the shells hanging in local outdoor shops are equal, if not superior, to those available in Europe and North America.

The fit is a prime consideration. Try several parkas with a fleece-type jacket underneath to ensure there is room for donning warm layers. Check sleeve length and note if the cuffs reach your knuckles. This length will enable you to reach into those Telemark pole plants without the sleeve riding up your arm. Select a parka length suited to your favourite pursuit. Crotch-length garments are popular for skiing, though overpants may be necessary in foul conditions. Parkas for long wet days of scrub bashing tend to reach down to the knee, which gaiters reach up to, allowing overpants to stay in the pack. Thigh-length jackets are a good compromise between the freedom of one and the protection of the other.

Fabric is critical to your comfort. The rainwear in this survey falls into two broad fabric groups—waterproof/breathable and simply waterproof.

Gore-Tex was the first, and is still the most respected of the waterproof/breathables. Its micro-porous PTFE membrane is a complex honeycomb of tiny pores. These pores are too small for water droplets to penetrate from outside, yet are large enough to allow water vapour molecules to escape. Condensation is reduced since it can pass to the exterior of the membrane rather than build up on the interior. Gore-Tex is available as a two- or three-layer fabric. Bushwalkers favour three-layer garments as they are generally more waterproof, durable, and cheaper than the soft, supple two-layer styles.

While a great technological development, Gore-Tex is not a miracle fabric and will at times prove incapable of releasing condensation at a rate you'd like. The outside environment may be as humid as the atmosphere you've generated inside, and the moisture vapour can see no good reason for leaving one saturated atmosphere for another. Or it may be that the fabric's water-repellent finish has washed or worn off. Water soaks in to the exterior of your garment instead of beading up in little drops, and in heavy rain, if the outside cloth becomes too soaked, then moisture vapour inside will be unable to escape through what is essentially a solid wall of water. You can easily alleviate this through

the careful application of a water-repellent spray. Gore-Tex will not work for all people all of the time, but is currently considered the pick of the bunch.

Entrant is a coating which sets deep into the inside of the outer fabric. Also micro-porous and of a honeycomb-type structure, this coating functions in much the same manner as Gore-Tex. Just as the first generation of Gore-Tex fabric had problems with delamination, Entrant initially had problems with its waterproofness. However, independent tests suggest that the latest Entrant Hi-Resist is as waterproof as Gore-Tex. Only available in two-layer, Entrant has been used mainly in ski-oriented garments due to its softness.

MVT stands for Moisture Vapour Transmission and is the name given to Peter Storm's waterproof/breathable fabric. MVT has taken a different tack from the micro-porous approach and introduced a non-poromeric fabric. The MVT is guaranteed 100% waterproof and windproof. Breathability is obtained through an interesting process of molecular transfer, where moisture vapour molecules are passed along chains of both water-loving and water-hating molecules inherent in the coating. Lemonade goes flat in plastic bottles through a similar process, as the fizzy gases diffuse through the otherwise leak-proof surface.

Try to borrow different parkas and make your own judgement as to which breathable fabric performs to your demands. Ask for as many opinions as you're able, bearing in mind that each fabric works well but some work better for different people.

Non-breathable waterproof fabrics ease decision-making because they make no claims that condensation can escape. Rather, they concentrate on being waterproof-only.

Supercoat and **Stormtech** use a elastomer coating of hypalon which achieves a laboratory test waterproofness approximately twice that of Gore-Tex, but they don't breathe. Hypalon is resistant to ultraviolet light, extreme temperatures, salt, oil and even sulphuric acid, to name a few. Supercoat and Stormtech get round the condensation problem by having a tricot mesh bonded to the inside, so that excess moisture spreads out along this scrim in order to evaporate more quickly. While some stickiness is likely, it should be less than with merely coated fabrics.

Polyurethane and **polyvinyl chloride** are two of the most popular coated fabrics because of their durability. They offer a substantial cost saving over more technically advanced fabrics, but at some reduction in performance. PU is great for occasional jaunts in the rain, but as it eventually tends to peel



Above, 'fishing for marlin', Point Perpendicular, New South Wales, Glenn Robbins

and flake is not recommended for extreme or long-term use. PVC is generally a longer-lasting coating which is very waterproof, though somewhat stiffer and heavier than PU. They are good options where price is of prime concern.

Dry japara is polyester/cotton waxed with a fabric mill's version of 'a secret blend of 11 herbs and spices', two of which are said to be acrylic resin and drying oil. With a relatively soft hand and 'cottony' feel, dry japara is an old favourite among many bushwalkers. While quite weatherproof initially, after use the garment will require re-proofing and, in most cases, dry japara garments do not have sealed seams, though this can be remedied with liquid sealant.

Sealed seams are essential on any garment to be exposed to inclement weather and most producers now carry out this

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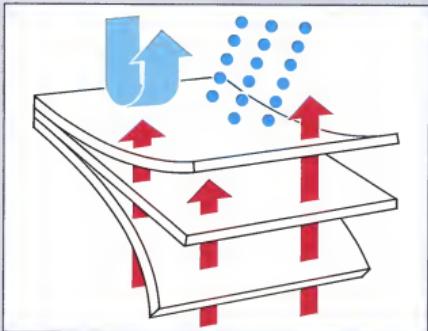
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Wild Gear Survey

process. Tape sealing is the common method. A hot-air nozzle activates heat-sensitive glue on one side of the tape as it is being pressed on to the seam between two rollers, forming a waterproof bond between fabric and tape. Unfortunately, this seal is never to the same standard as the actual fabric and some leakage might still occur in torrential downpours. For instance, a Gore tape-sealed seam may withstand 15 pounds per square inch of water pressure while the Gore-Tex fabric is rated in excess of 80 PSI. Hoods, waist draw-cords and major openings are the most tricky, so be sure to inspect these areas for comprehensive sealing.

Function requires similar scrutiny to fit and fabric. Why pay for a hi-tech fabric if rain floods in through the zip closure, or your vision is obscured by a poorly designed hood?

Coil zips are smooth running, very strong and self-repairing if accidentally jammed in fabric. However, the thread holding the teeth in place is prone to wear and tear. Moulded zips with their chunky, independent teeth are actually not as strong as their coil cousins, though may last longer as the teeth are pressed into the zipper tape without the need of a covering thread. The zip itself is not weatherproof and needs to be protected by a system of covering flaps. If you can afford to, choose a parka with a broad triple-flap arrangement instead of leak-prone, narrow, single flaps. The former offers excellent protection, with a minimum of two flaps to cover the zip from the outside, and often a back-up flap reducing any wicking action behind the zip. A double flap system is a good middle ground, especially if both are on the exterior.

Securing the flaps in place will be touch tape or press studs. Touch tape closes uniformly, but does snag other clothing and requires additional seam-sealing. Press studs don't offer quite the same degree of protection but they don't need sealing, nor do they assault your fleece jumper. Touch tape works best if the thinner widths (16-12 millimetres) are used, and studs can be quite storm-worthy if closely spaced together.

Next take a peek at the wrist closures. Short of a latex rubber cuff, water will eventually seep through, especially whenever you raise your arm. Touch-tape tabs are superior to elastic as they can be adjusted for layering or ventilation. Avoid closures which form a funnel of fabric beyond the actual wrist tab.

Other closures worth considering are waist draw-cords which trap in body heat and seal out wintry draughts. For most bushwalking situations, these are unnecessary as the hip-belt serves the same function. However, on an evening ascent of Mt Ossa or a blustery descent of Perisher they are most welcome. If you suspect you might need one, opt for the external variety so you can adjust without opening your parka.

Be sure to always test the hoods of rain shells. A well-cut hood should provide a balance between vision and protection. Ideally, you should retain your normal line of sight—straight ahead as well as peripherally left and right. Do up the hood and turn your head around; find out if you can keep this vision without the hood fighting you. Check for protection by fastening the cord grips to see if only your goggles or sunglasses would be exposed during blizzards. Most of the shells reviewed sported visors with additional stiffening to maintain protection in gusty weather. If you are planning to wear a warm cap or climbing helmet underneath, ask the shop assistant if you could borrow one and try that fit.

Pockets seem an necessary evil on most parkas, providing handy storage yet compromising weatherproofing by adding additional stitch-lines which must be seam-sealed. Hanging pockets generally drape inside the garment. Unfortunately, placing wet map cases or gloves in these pockets can cause dampness inside, as the fabric used is often not waterproof. Bellows pockets are probably the most useful as the extra fold of fabric offers considerable storage room. Hand-warmers are a great place to hide cold fingers from prying winds, but make sure they have drainage holes or they'll soon develop into small water buckets. Pockets themselves are rarely waterproof due to the seams required to create them, unless you liquid seal the stitch lines.

Features are those additional extras which aren't essential but can quite often be appreciated. The chin guard is placed at the top of a zipper so you don't bump into the slider when it's done right up. A touch-tape tab is sometimes found on large hoods to adjust their size when not wearing a helmet. Detachable or fold-away hoods are also popular as they make for a smarter looking jacket. Check to make sure that this extra construction is well sealed and the hood is still functional. Several parkas increase their

potential ventilation by inserting zips in the underarm of the garment. The additional airflow is wonderful when stoking up a steep incline, but this needs to be weighed against the increased risk of leakage. Internal storm skirts keep out unwanted breezes as well as powder and spindrift when deep in the white stuff. Inspect carefully to be sure that attachments do not impeach upon weatherproofness.

Overpants are necessary when the weather really gets atrocious, even though most of us can't stand them. Choose a quality pair for those miserable days when you'll be glad you carried them. Like your parka, look for minimal exposed seams, reliable closures and broad covering flaps. An adjustable waist will help stop them sliding down under the pressure of a pack. Full-length zips will allow them to go on or off without removing large boots, crampons or skis. If planning to spend heaps of time in hostile conditions, consider the bib-and-brace-style salopettes available from several of the manufacturers listed.

Wear a polypropylene, chlorofibre or Drytech garment under your shell to transfer moisture away from your skin. For cool weather, a fleece top is ideal as it will be warm even if wet from leakage or condensation. While searching for your perfect rain shell, remember that many parkas available will allow you to get about comfortably in the rain, but nothing shy of a diver's dry suit will really keep out the water.

The 29 shells listed are a representation of those available. Many producers have models which we could not include due to space restrictions. Macpac, Superior and Fairdown will each have a new rainwear range available by winter, but were unable to provide samples for this survey.

Use shows the main pursuit for which the garment is suited, but there may be many other activities it could be used for. Style refers to a parka as having a fixed hood, a jacket being shorter with an unfixed hood, and an anorak being a pullover type. Weights given are for size medium, where possible. Sealed seams are denoted by a yes (Y) or no (N). (Approx) prices were supplied by the manufacturers in December 1988.

Choose carefully, and the next time you are out in foul conditions it may be your turn to laugh at your companions. ▲

Warren McLaren is an active walker and skier who has travelled widely. He lives in Sydney where he is a designer for a leading manufacturer of specialist outdoor clothing.

Wild Gear Survey Waterproof Parkas

Use	Style, length	Fabric	Weight, grams	Sealed seams	Main opening	Wrist closures	Other closures	Pocket type/ closure, position	Comments	Approx. price	
Any Mountain Australia											
Windjammer	Skirt	Anorak, waist	2 layer Emratt Hi-resist taffeta	465	Y	Coil zip double flap, touch tape	Touch tape	Hem draw-cord with cord grips	1 hand-warmer/tp, waist 1 hanging zip, waist	Hand-warmer Thinner fleece-lined Also available in 2-layer Gore-Tex	\$275
Cloud Peak #2	Bushwalking	Jacket, high	3 layer Gore-Tex Tastan	750	Y	Moulded zip, double flap, touch tape	Touch tape	Internal waist draw cord with cord grips	2/flat touch tape, high 1 hanging touch tape, chest	Detachable hood, high collar Also available in 3-layer Stata Gore-Tex	\$299
Mountain Shell	Mountaineering	Jacket, crotch	2/layer Gore-Tex taffeta	640	Y	As above	Touch tape	As above	2/flat zip, high 1 flat inner touch tape, high 1 hanging touch tape, chest	Detachable hood rolls into high collar Also available in 2-layer Emratt with mesh lining	\$369
Berghaus Australia											
Lightning	Bushwalking	Parka, high	3-layer Gore-Tex Tastan	750	Y	Moulded zip, single flap, touch tape	Touch tape	External waist draw cord with cord grips	2/flat zip, high 1 flat zip, chest	Chin guard	\$298

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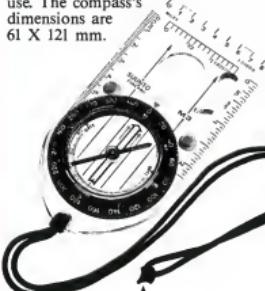
The M-3

boasts both elegant design and performance features that place it solidly in the elite class.

This ergonomically designed compass is intended for racing and training and can also be used by schools and scouts. The features that make it so outstanding include an anatomically designed transparent baseplate with rounded lower edges and lipped upper edges, in addition to rubber pads to keep the compass from slipping on the map. There are two holes (one triangular and one round) for control marking and a lens for fourfold magnification, in addition to direction-of-travel arrows.

The capsule is the same as in the Suunto MC-1 and, thanks to the unique bearing mechanism, dirt that may have lodged is discarded when the capsule rotates. The M-3 is also available with a declination correction scale (M-3 D).

Luminous marks facilitate night use. The compass's dimensions are 61 X 121 mm.



SUUNTO

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Wild Gear Survey Waterproof Parkas continued

Use	Style/length	Fabric	Weight grams	Sealed seams	Main opening	Wrist closures	Other closures	Pocket type/ closure position	Comments	Approx. price	
Bushgear Australia											
MT Stirling	Travel	Parka, thigh	3-layer Gore-Tex Taslan	560	Y	Car zip double flap stud	Touch tape	2 hanging/zip type, thigh	Chin guard	\$169	
Si Ciar	Bushwalking	Parka, knee	As above	670	Y	Moulded zip, triple flap stud	Touch tape	External waist draw cord with cord grips	2 flat/zip, thigh	Chin guard	\$199
J&H Australia											
Quarry	Travel	Parka, thigh	3-layer Gore-Tex Taslan	520	Y	Moulded zip single flap touch tape	Touch tape	2 flat/zip type, thigh	Chin guard	\$204	
Cats & Dogs	Bushwalking	Parka, knee	As above	680	Y	Moulded zip double flap touch tape	Touch tape	External waist draw cord with cord grips	2 flat/zip type, thigh 1 hanging/zip, chest	Chin guard Hood adjustment	\$256
Cascade	Bushwalking	Parka, thigh	As above	880	Y	Moulded zip triple flap stud	Touch tape	As above	2 belted/zip, thigh 2 hand-warmer, thigh 2 belted/zip, chest 1 hanging/zip, chest	Chin guard Underarm zips Hood adjustment	\$329
Kathmandu New Zealand											
Traveler	Travel	Jacket, crotch	PU nylon taffeta	345	N	Car zip single inside flap	Elastic	Hem draw cord with cord grips	2 flat/zip, waist	Hood tucks into collar. Jacket tucks into own small bum bag	\$90
Rainstorm	Bushwalking	Parka, thigh	PVC nylon	625	Y	Moulded zip double flap, touch tape	Touch tape		2 flat, thigh		\$99
Rangipoa	Bushwalking	Parka, knee	3-layer Gore-Tex Taslan	720	Y	As above	Touch tape	External waist draw cord with cord zips	2 flat/zip type, thigh 1 hanging/zip, chest		\$228
Mont Australia											
Rugger	Bushwalking	Parka, thigh	Dry uppers (polyester/cotton)	665	N	Moulded zip single flap stud	Elastic	Internal waist draw cord with cord grips	2 flat, thigh 1 flat/zip, chest	Double shoulder Back vent	\$199
Blizzard	Skiing	Anorak, crotch	3-layer Gore-Tex Taslan	505	Y	Moulded zip single flap touch tape	Touch tape	Hem draw cord with cord grips	1 hanging/zip, chest	Chin guard	\$216
Tempest	Bushwalking	Parka, thigh	3-layer Gore-Tex Taslan	715	Y	Moulded zip double flap touch tape	Touch tape	External waist draw cord with cord grips	2 flat, thigh 2 hand-warmer, thigh 1 hanging/zip, chest	Chin guard	\$232
Mountain Designs Australia											
Thunderbolt	Bushwalking	Parka, knee	3-layer Supersoft nylon	595	Y	Moulded zip single flap touch tape	Touch tape	External waist draw cord with cord grips	2 flat/zip type, thigh 1 flat/zip, chest	Chin guard	\$149
Wild Fantastic	Skiing	Anorak, crotch	3-layer Gore-Tex Taslan	560	Y	Car zip single flap stud	Touch tape	Hem draw cord with cord grips	1 flat/zip type, waist 1 hand-warmer/touch tape, waist	Chin guard	\$236
Stratus	Bushwalking	Parka, thigh	As above	740	Y	Moulded zip, triple flap, stud	Touch tape	External waist draw cord with cord grips	2 belted/zip type, thigh 2 hand-warmer, thigh 1 hanging/zip, chest	Chin guard Hood adjustment	\$249
Paddy Pallin Australia											
Vagabond	Travel	Parka, knee	3-layer Bamboo nylon	535	Y	Moulded zip double flap stud, touch tape	Touch tape	External half/waist draw cord with cord grips	2 belted/zip, thigh		\$139
Voyager	Bushwalking	Parka, crotch	3-layer Gore-Tex Taslan	560	Y	As above	Touch tape		2 flat/zip, chest		\$229
Vista	Bushwalking	Parka, knee	As above	590	Y	Moulded zip, triple flap stud, touch tape	Touch tape	External half/waist draw cord with cord grips	2 belted/zip, thigh 2 hand-warmer, thigh 1 flat/zip, chest		\$265
Peter Storm UK											
117	Travel	Parka, thigh	MVT nylon	300	Y	Moulded zip single flap touch tape	Elastic		2 hanging/zip, thigh		\$100
317	Bushwalking	Parka, knee	PU nylon	520	N	Moulded zip, double flap touch tape	Touch tape elastic		2 flat/zip type, thigh	Chin guard	\$154
811	Bushwalking	Parka, knee	MVT nylon	575	Y	As above	Touch tape elastic	Internal waist draw cord with cord grips	2 flat/zip, thigh 2 hand-warmer, thigh	Chin guard	\$214
Richards McCullum Australia											
Storm Bay	Bushwalking	Parka, knee	Dry uppers (polyester/cotton)	625	N	Moulded zip single flap touch tape	Touch tape		2 flat, thigh 1 flat/zip, chest	Double shoulder Chin guard	\$110
Port Davey	Bushwalking	Parka, knee	3-layer Gore-Tex Taslan	660	Y	As above	Touch tape		2 flat/zip type, thigh 1 flat/zip, chest	Chin guard	\$244
Wilderness Equipment Australia											
Zero	Skiing	Anorak, crotch	2-layer Gore-Tex Tactel	580	Y	Car zip double flap stud	Touch tape	Side car/zip, double zip, stud, half hem draw cord with cord grips	1 hanging/zip, chest	Chin guard Hood stays in collar Stuff sac	\$256
Parka 40	Skiing	Jacket, thigh	3-layer Gore-Tex Taslan	725	Y	As above	Touch tape	Internal waist draw cord with cord grips	2 belted/zip type, thigh 2 hand-warmer, thigh 1 flat/zip, chest	As above	\$288
Parka 50	Bushwalking	Parka, thigh	As above	800	Y	As above	Touch tape	As above	As above	Chin guard Stuff sac Internal waist skirt Underarm zips	\$295



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Annapurna Down Bag. Courtesy Mountain Equipment. Photo by Ian Martin.



NIKWAX
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Compasses for Bushwalking

A few pointers—a *Wild* survey

Theory and Practice. Australian bushwalkers are well served by an ever-increasing range of topographic maps. It's possible, with the help of one or more of these maps, to plan a route in most parts of the country and to have a good idea in advance of the distance to be covered, height to be gained and lost, and what will be found along the way. Or that's the theory. The transition from well-laid plan to successfully executed trip is seldom entirely trouble-free. (/*know. Editor*) It can be made easier with the judicious use of a very simple tool—the compass.

The basic compass for bushwalking—and this also applies to ski touring, rogaining and orienteering—is known as the protractor, and consists of three essential parts. The bit that points north is the needle. This is free to rotate on a fulcrum within a transparent, round capsule or housing, which is usually graduated around its perimeter in degrees, or some other angular measure, and marked on its base with a series of parallel lines aligned along the capsule's north-south axis. The capsule in turn is mounted and can be rotated within a transparent, rectangular base plate which is marked with two or more parallel lines, and usually an arrow, as well as sundry other information.

The needle, capsule and base plate allow your theoretical route to be translated into practice, from map to surroundings, in a three-step procedure. This is described in ample detail in leaflets accompanying each of the compasses surveyed. Briefly, the base plate is aligned on the map from your present position to your destination; the capsule is rotated until its north-south lines correspond with magnetic north on the map; then the compass is removed from the map and held so that the needle and the north-south markings in the capsule are aligned. Your destination is then in the direction indicated by the arrow on the base plate.

All the compasses surveyed can be used in this manner. Why, then, the multitude of models available? A prerequisite of navigation by the method described is that you know where you are, and can locate this position on a map. If this is not the case, it is sometimes possible to identify physical features both on the map and around you. If so, you can determine your position by taking bearings from them. The standard protractor compass, since it must be viewed from above, can be used with only limited accuracy for obtaining bearings in the field. Using mirrors or prisms, some compasses can be held in the line of sight, allowing bearings to be taken with great accuracy. Several of the compasses listed incorporate such a sighting mechanism.

Another hitch to navigation is that magnetic north is seldom in the same place as grid north, or north on the map, the variation

between the two being known as the angle of declination. This angle is about 12° east in much of eastern Australia and as much as 5° west in parts of the west. Magnetic north will be shown on most maps—if not, the map is probably drawn up on magnetic north—and must be taken into account every time a bearing is translated from map to surroundings, and vice versa. The mental arithmetic involved is not complicated. Many a walker, however, weary or under pressure, has subtracted instead of added or forgotten to make an adjustment altogether, and thus headed off in the wrong direction. Some compasses allow a simple adjustment, at the start of each trip, which will thereafter automatically correct for the angle of declination.

Other features distinguishing one compass from another will be of interest to those few walkers with special needs. Base plates can be large or small and contain more or less information: scales in millimetres or inches for measuring distance on maps; scales translating map distance directly into distance on the ground, romers; for accurately determining grid references. Some compasses have magnifiers, luminous bits, built-in light sources, stencils and step counters. Some contain a clinometer, a built-in plumb

bob to help determine the angle of a slope. If a beginner, then one of the simpler, less expensive models will give years of reliable service. If you've been at it for some time and know what you want, then in all likelihood there is a compass available just for you.

All three brands surveyed manufacture a wide range of compasses. There are, for example, over 50 different *Silva* compasses for use on land and more than 40 marine models, and the *Suunto* range is only slightly smaller. These are good-quality instruments and will do the job required in most circumstances. If you use one properly and still end up in the wrong place, it is possible that the compass is at fault, in which case back-up service is available in Australia for all three brands. It may be that you have strayed among deposits of ferrous minerals which upset compass operation: the Walls of Jerusalem in central Tasmania is an area notorious for this problem.

The most likely explanation, however, is human error, and the best way to eliminate errors in compass handling is practice. Keep the compass handy when walking, and use it until you are confident. Better still, set time aside for rogaining or orienteering ('cunning running').

Stephen Hamilton and Nick Tapp

Wild Equipment Survey Compasses for Bushwalking

	Luminous	Base-plate scale	Features	Approx price
Recta Switzerland				
150i	N	Millimetres, inches	Magnifying lens	\$22
550i	Y	As above, interchangeable romer	As above	\$44
DP2	Y	None	Sight mirror, protective housing	\$58
860i	Y	Millimetres, inches, interchangeable romer	Mounted magnifying lens	\$64
Silva Sweden				
8NL	N	Millimetres		\$17
7NL	N	As above		\$18
3NL	Y or N	Centimetres and millimetres	Magnifying lens, rounded base plate	\$23
27	Y	Inches	Sight mirror, attachment for sheet, protective housing	\$41
4	Y or N	Millimetres, inches, romer	Magnifying lens, rubber feet	\$48
16	Y	Millimetres, inches	Sight mirror, protective housing	\$49
15T	Y	Centimetres and millimetres, inches	Sight mirror, rubber feet, protective housing, clasp, declination adjustment	\$61
15-22	Y	Slide-on	Magnifying lens, rubber feet, pace counter	\$62
54NL	N	Millimetres, romer	Optical sight, forward and reciprocal bearings, rubber feet, protective housing	\$93
56NL	N	Millimetres, inches	Optical sight, forward and reciprocal bearings, protective housing	\$98
Suunto Finland				
PA55	N	Centimetres and millimetres, inches		\$14
A-1000	N	Centimetres and millimetres, romer		\$14
JES	N	Millimetres, romer	Multicoloured markings simply use	\$20
RA-66	Y	Centimetres and millimetres, romer	Magnifying lens, stencil	\$23
MS	Y	Centimetres and millimetres, inches, romer	Magnifying lens, rubber feet, rounded base, stencil	\$24
RA-62	Y	Millimetres, inches, romer	Magnifying lens, stencil	\$25
A-2300	Y	Centimetres and millimetres, romer	Magnifying lens, rounded base, stencil	\$31
MC-1	Y	Centimetres and millimetres, inches, romer	Sight mirror, declination adjustment, clinometer, protective housing case	\$62

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High-tech Half-frame. The cameras included in the lightweight camera survey in *Wild* no 31 utilized full-frame 35 millimetre film format. Half-frame format, which produces twice as many photographs from a similar roll of film, has always entailed a significant loss of definition on enlargement. The *Yashica Samurai* camera banks on improved film quality and its own optical precision to offset this problem, and takes advantage of half-frame format in a number of ways. Its 25-75 millimetre zoom lens gives a range of angles of view equivalent to a 35-105 millimetre zoom on a 35 millimetre camera. The film is transported vertically and the lens built into the camera body, giving the *Samurai* an unusual shape, reminiscent of a miniature video camera. It has a single-lens-reflex viewing system; automatic focusing, exposure, film travel and flash; weighs 560 grams without battery and costs RRP \$750.

Travel Light. Painstakingly designed for comfort and convenience while travelling, *Integral Travelwear* from *Paddy Pallin* is made from Exodus, a nylon fabric with the feel and appearance of cotton. The material has a string of desirable features such as high resistance to abrasion, low weight, small packed size and ease of care.

Longs and Shorts. Tailored mainly for men, are pants with generous leg room, carefully positioned pockets, and a reinforced seat. The *Sirocco* is an over-shirt which can be used as shirt or jacket in different circumstances and its two large, zipped chest pockets have hand-warmers behind. Longs weigh 220 grams and cost RRP \$94.95. Shorts weigh 140 grams and cost RRP \$79.80, and the *Sirocco* weighs 250 grams and costs RRP \$98.50, from *Paddy Pallin* shops. Priced beyond the means and engineered beyond the needs of many, these are garments for those who expect and can afford more than ordinary performance from street clothes.

Top of the Glops? *Nikwax* is a British manufacturer of waterproofing compounds for leather and a variety of other fabrics, which are now being imported into Australia by *Outdoor Survival*. The comprehensive range includes both a liquid and a wax for proofing leather, a wax for renewing proofed cotton garments, a liquid called TX.10 for application to most fabrics and insulators including down, and a concoction for impregnating maps. Many *Wild* readers will want to look out for one or other of these products. Why not douse your next issue for reading in the rain?

Eagle Aerodynamics Improved. The Wedge-Tail harness, a feature of the *Mountain Designs* range of rucksacks (see Equipment, *Wild* no 26), has recently been modified to better accommodate the mysteries of the human form. The packs are now also different in shape to accommodate broad-brimmed hats and hyper-extension of the neck. Two models, the *Rongbuk* and the *Baltoro*, are available in canvas to repel the entry of water. RRP from \$259 to \$315 for the various sizes and styles.

Throw in the Towel. Hot on the heels of lightweight, quick-drying synthetic clothing

comes the lightweight, quick-drying synthetic towel. The *Packtowl* (sic) from America is made from Viscose, measures 740 x 250 millimetres and weighs about 45 grams. It works in the same way as a chamois cloth—wipe, rinse, wring—and can also serve as a pot holder, a bandage, a bandanna, a compress...the list goes on. If the spelling offends, be glad you're not a fisherman: their version is a *Takktowl*. RRP \$11.95, from *Outdoor Agencies*.

At a cost of approximately 40 cents, a *Chux cloth* from a supermarket is worth considering as an alternative. However, it will need to be replaced regularly, while the *Packtowl* is said to improve with use.



Above: Wild Advertising Manager and resident gear freak, Stephen Hamilton, putting a pair of *Hot Chillys* to the test on the first ascent of *Doing Time* (grade 21), Black Ians Rocks, Victoria. Glenn Tempest

Spice up Your Wardrobe. Despite a distinct downhill-ski flavour, the range of clothing from *Any Mountain* contains enough interest for many off-piste skiers, walkers and rock-climbers. The *Popover* and *Zip Front* tops were included in the warm clothing survey in *Wild* no 30. The new *Deluxe* is a pullover top made from Malden Polarlite, the lightweight polyester pile currently employed in *Paddy Pallin* clothing under the name *Pluslite*. The *Deluxe* has a high, zipped collar, two hand-warmer pockets, and ribbing around cuffs and waist. It weighs approximately 450 grams, costs RRP \$120, and is made in Australia.

Hot Chillys, made in the USA, is a range of garments in a variety of fabric blends whose common ingredient is Lycra. The three we have seen are a singlet incorporating wool, polyester and Lycra, with polypropylene next to the skin (RRP \$47), tight-fitting pants in nylon, Lycra and polyurethane (RRP \$143), and climbing tights in DuPont Coolmax, which appears to be a close cousin to Lycra (RRP \$58). Quality is impressive, the menu is extensive and *Any Mountain* has the lot.

The Assistant Editor's Chair. From *Crazy Creek Products* (we kid you not) in Montana, USA, comes the *Power Lounger*, a folding seat consisting of two rectangles of closed-cell foam in a nylon envelope. Each of these pads is supported, in the manner of an internal-framed rucksack, by two stays. The structure is completed by two adjustable straps which provide the missing edges of a type of hollow

triangular prism. One sits in this prism, and if fortunate won't tip over backwards. Stability is greatly improved in the *Deluxe* model, in which a third panel of foam folds out to give support under the calves. The *Deluxe* model can be laid flat for use as a 128 centimetre-long sleeping mat, and all models can be worn on the head to keep off rain. Imported by *Outdoor Agencies*, the *Power Lounger Deluxe* weighs 900 grams and costs RRP \$139.80.

Astonishing Feats. *Merrell* is a name known to those with an interest in cross country ski footwear. Importer *Nordic Traders* now has a range of *Merrell* footwear for walkers, from the *Tail*, a light shoe (RRP \$116), through to the *Trek* (RRP \$159) and the *Venture* (RRP \$235), walking boots with uppers of suede and top-grain leather respectively, padded and lined with Cambrelle (see Gear Survey, *Wild* no 28, for an explanation of terms). All models feature a cement-bonded, deeply lugged sole and EVA mid-sole with a cushion of air under the heel.

Impressive in the middle of the field is a lightweight boot with an upper of Cordura and suede, cut low around the Achilles tendon, called *Eagle* or *Lazer* depending on colour scheme. Priced at RRP \$146, it is aimed not only at walkers but also at the increasing number of mountain bike enthusiasts. Consequently it should be considered alongside a new boot from *Scarpa*, the *Verde Mountain Bike* (RRP \$229), which is similar in many respects but has a suede pad atop the fore-foot about where a bicycle's toe clip would go, as well as a strap across the front of the ankle which fastens with touch tape, in the manner of some basketball shoes. The *Verde*'s colour scheme is designed for maximum visual impact, which should dull somewhat after exposure to mud.

What's Cookin'? With the price of imported aluminium alloy billets climbing towards the \$100 mark, the quest for quality alternatives has taken on some urgency. One of the best is the range of *Zebra stainless steel cook-ware* sold in *Southern Cross Equipment* shops. As well as billets with removable warming trays, the range includes mugs, plates and mess kits. Perhaps a little on the heavy side for long trips (and stainless steel is not the best material from which to drink hot liquids), the range is solid, well finished, seam-free and, at prices ranging from \$4.00 to \$28, good value.

Ankle Biters Grow Up. Australian-made *Outgear Bowyang gaiters* (see Equipment, *Wild* nos 23 and 31) have changed with the times. Still made from 12-ounce canvas and closing at the top with a buckle and webbing in a nylon sleeve, they now boast a pad of Cordura to protect the inside of each ankle from ski edges, wayward crampon points and routine scuffing. Rather than relying on elastic, the foot section is shaped for a snug fit over the boot, and has two hooks at the front to suit both high- and low-lacing footwear. A fourth, extra-large, size has been added. RRP \$49.

New products (on loan to *Wild*) and/or information about them, including colour slides, are welcome for possible review in this department. Written items should be typed, include recommended retail prices and preferably not exceed 200 words. Send to the Editor, *Wild*, PO Box 418, Prahran, Victoria 3181.

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Popular New South Wales walking areas in print

Poetry of the Mountains by Mark O'Connor and Ian Brown (Second Back Row Press, 1988, RRP \$14.95).

The publication of a collection of poems about a major Australian wilderness area by a recognized poet is something of an event. When it is well illustrated with outstanding colour photos and attractively designed and printed, it is more of an event. *Poetry of the Mountains* is such a book.

Whilst not a substantial volume, *Poetry* none the less conveys something of the essence of the Blue Mountains, which have been spiritual home to generations of New South Wales bushwalkers and many others. Its contribution to our appreciation of the Blue Mountains in particular, and the Australian bush generally, will be significant.

Chris Baxter

Fitzroy Falls and Beyond: A Guide to Shoalhaven-Ettrema Wilderness, Budawang State Recreation Area (The Budawang Committee, 1988, RRP \$26 [soft cover], \$43 [hard cover]).

This book is a companion volume to *Pigeon House and Beyond* published in 1982 (see review *Wild* no 7). While the earlier book provided a comprehensive guide to the Budawang region of New South Wales, the new volume describes, in a similar way (and in 350 pages), the area to the north—the spectacular Ettrema and Shoalhaven gorges.

The rugged nature of this region has made it very popular for bushwalking, mostly within the boundary of Morton National Park. The book's publication coincides with the fiftieth anniversary of this park.

Like *Pigeon House and Beyond*, this volume is divided into chapters covering topics such as geology, vegetation, canoeing, place names, bushwalking history and bushfires. Each has been written by a specialist. This has led to problems. For example, Dr Dark, the pioneer rockclimber and a member of the first party to canoe the Shoalhaven, has his name spelt differently in different chapters.

People unfamiliar with the region will probably benefit most from reading Tom Hayllar's large chapter which provides an appetite-whetting guide to many walks suitable for a wide range of abilities. It contains 11 superb maps drawn by George Elliot, who is responsible for the famous *Budawang Sketch Map*.

The other chapters provide much of interest. Most of the features described in the text are illustrated by numerous colour and black-and-white photographs. Some of the latter, showing mines on the Shoalhaven and Yalwal Rivers in their heyday, are fascinating. The mining history is a little brief, however. In 1978 the Canberra Bushwalking Club magazine, *It*, published an excellent series of articles by Warwick Blaydon on early mines, but not much of this material has been included. Of recent history, little is made of the important conservation battle to prevent



Above, typical Blue Mountains scenery (the Kowmung River valley from Cockatoo Look-out) as depicted by Ian Brown in *Poetry of the Mountains*.

mining in Jones Creek near the head of Ettrema Gorge. This was a major issue in the late 1970s and resulted in many conservation and bushwalking club office-holders facing defamation proceedings.

Fitzroy Falls and Beyond is an excellent book and a credit to the Budawang Committee, particularly Col Watson (Chairman) and Jim Thomson (the Editor). It would be wonderful if every wild place in NSW had a guide such as this.

David Noble

A Day in the Bush: A Selection of Walks near Melbourne by Sandra Bardwell (Pindari Publications, 1988, RRP \$13.95).

It would be nice never to need books like *A Day in the Bush*. One of the joys of bushwalking is to set off with only a pattern of contour lines on a map, or the remembered glimpse of an enticing spur for guidance. And, after all, the more details a walkers' guidebook provides, the greater the opportunity for misinterpretation and consequent geographical embarrassment, which then, of course, is all the fault of whoever wrote it.

I like to think Sandra Bardwell would sympathize with these sentiments. The introductory section of her new book—designed to replace earlier volumes now unobtainable—strikes a nice balance between providing information of use to the novice bushwalker (though I've never believed that wet socks and boots make for more blisters: rather the opposite) and sending him or her off to find out more elsewhere. Maps and other

specialized publications are well documented, plenty of useful addresses are provided, and the reader is encouraged to experiment.

The 44 walks described visit several areas I'd hardly heard of as well as some of the best-known country within a day's drive of Melbourne. All, the author assures us, were surveyed and checked within the last two years. The maps are clear. Black-and-white photographs and line drawings enhance the book's appeal. The index lists each walk several times in a number of useful categories.

We do need books like *A Day in the Bush*. They have served us well by the time we are ready to do without them.

Nick Tapp

Wonnangatta Moroka National Park by John Siseman (Pindari Publications, second [revised] edition 1988, RRP \$13.95).

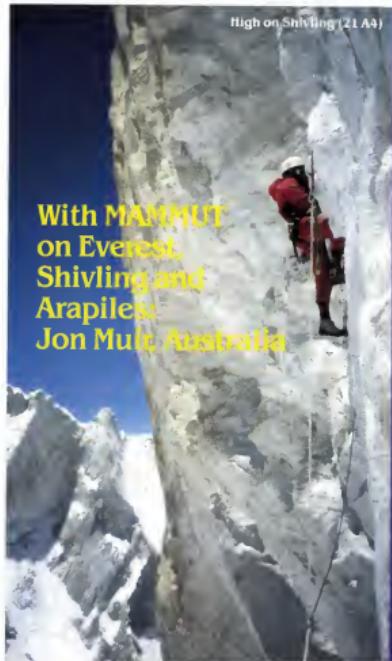
This attractive little book has been a 'best seller' with Victorian bushwalkers since the appearance of the first edition in 1985; and rightly so.

Updated and revised, there is also worthwhile additional material: notes are included on a new walk in the Wonnangatta Station area, Square Head Jinny and on McMillans Walking Track.

Bushwalkers now have even more reason to visit the best bushwalking area in the State. They should see it while they still have the chance—it may not survive the current wave of logging and tourism development.

CB

High and Wild A 20-minute VHS video produced by Kestrel Film and Video for the Wilderness Society (1988, RRP \$39.95).



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The Wilderness Society long ago discarded its image as a reactionary group responding only to environmental degradation. The 20-minute video, *High and Wild*, is the most recent example of the society's educating role. Clearly intended for use in schools, *High and Wild* follows the bushwalking experiences of a school party on their first walk in the Victorian high country.

Set in the Mt Howitt-Crosscut Saw area, the scenery is magnificent. The topography of this region, with its steep drops and vistas of deep valleys and distant peaks, highlights the spectacular nature of the high country and is well chosen to interest the middle- to upper-secondary school student.

Producing a video which is attractive to today's electronically-overdosed youth is not an easy task. *High and Wild* tries to identify with its audience by reference to missing the footy, the band and a good night on the town. A few mild expletives also seek to identify with the vernacular of the intended audience. Unfortunately, the cultured voice of the narrator, the well articulated viewpoints and the wearing of Akubras will probably break down any sense of identity which government school students may otherwise have developed. However, the excellent photography and catchy music make for pleasant viewing.

The video presents the value of wilderness as it is 'discovered' by the group. The argument is an emotional one based on the party's growing realization that the bush is a pleasant place to be. Issues including Aboriginal history, logging, cattle grazing and our use of the environment are treated superficially and in a similarly emotional manner. But this seems appropriate to the style of production. After all, our emotional responses to wilderness are our principal motivation.

Peter Martin

The Loneliest Mountain A 48-minute VHS or Beta video (Film Australia/Riverheart, 1988, RRP \$54.95).

The précis on the wrapper of this video promises continuous adventure at a high pitch. It's all there; the shrill tones, thankfully, penetrate no deeper than the cover. The story is of the first ascent, by a party of six Australians, of Mt Minto in the Admiralty Range in Antarctica. The mountain is approached by a small sailing vessel and then a 150 kilometre trip across glaciers and a frozen fjord. Each section of the southward journey is eventful, and the retreat is at least as arduous.

Much of the interest lies not in the details of the technical difficulties of the enterprise—which are certainly considerable, though not the same as for an ascent of a steep Himalayan peak, for example—but in the observation of a small band of men becoming steadily absorbed in the adventure of their choosing, and being increasingly affected by the vast empty landscape around them. Even on the small screen, Antarctica is undeniably impressive.

The production has many strengths, among them some memorable visuals from both sea and land; its low-key commentary, especially the occasional pithy contributions of Greg

Mortimer; and the fact that film-makers Chris Hilton and Glenn Singleman accompanied the four other expedition members there and back. The occasional staginess can be forgiven. As a tale of 'seas of the pants' adventuring, and as an insight into the vexed question of Antarctica, *The Loneliest Mountain* is good viewing.

NT

A Vision of the Snowy Mountains by Elyne Mitchell (Macmillan, 1988, RRP \$29.95).

There are few people better qualified to write about the Snowy Mountains than Elyne Mitchell. Having lived in the foothills for over 50 years, she has traversed these mountains on both foot and ski, visiting and even pioneering some of the terrain with her late husband, Tom Mitchell, in the 1930s and 1940s. *A Vision of the Snowy Mountains* is not her first book on the region, but is certainly the most colourful. Jagungal, Blue Lake and Pretty Plain are just a few of the areas she details. More than 'descriptions', the book is a presentation of her thoughts and experiences. Poems and a large selection of colour photographs further help to convey her emotions.

A Vision of the Snowy Mountains is a well presented, easy-to-read book which will entertain for hours.

Glenn van der Knijff

Tantawangalo Visitors Guide by David Poland (University of NSW Bushwalking and Mountaineering Club, and the Wilderness Society, 1988, RRP \$3.95).

In the introduction to this small guidebook, Bob Brown writes that 'to see them is to want them saved'. Unfortunately, the magnificent forest areas described are under imminent threat of logging for woodchips.

This short but useful guide to the Tantawangalo contains information on access, picnic spots, campsites, look-outs, a dozen walks ranging from day to extended trips, and car- and bicycle-touring as well as important titbits such as where supplies and 24-hour petrol stations are located in the general region.

If you want to visit these beautiful forests, buy this guide and go soon, or all you may find will be stumps.

DN

On Rope: North American Vertical Rope Techniques by Allen Padgett and Bruce Smith (National Speleological Society, 1988, RRP \$34.95. Distributed by Outdoor Agencies).

Single-rope techniques were adopted to reduce the amount of gear and complicated logistics required in the exploration of the world's deepest caves. The USA initially led the field, with the experience and equipment utilized in the ascents of Yosemite Valley's big walls. In the last decade caving technology has changed, with stronger and tougher ropes being developed and a lot of gadgetry being invented. During this time, techniques have altered dramatically. The most notable change is the use of European-style free-rigging, where the rope doesn't touch the rock at all, thus avoiding abrasion—rope-work's main danger. Unfortunately, American techniques

have not kept pace with these changes, and sadly *On Rope* reflects this. *On Rope* deals specifically with American techniques and equipment. It aims at not only cavers but mountaineers, cliff rescuers, tree surgeons and window washers. Although it does acknowledge the existence of more modern caving devices and a European style, it is, almost by its own admission (in the sadly parochial history section), ten years behind the rest of the world.

On Rope is such a comprehensive compendium of techniques that choosing the most appropriate gear and prusik rig from the range outlined would be difficult. This is something best learned from peers, anyway. Certainly, there are good information and important safety considerations contained in its 341 pages. It is excellently illustrated with 425 instructional diagrams. The humor (sic) in these is distinctly American, and the dimensions, being only in feet and inches, are annoying. The diagrams clearly outline basic fundamentals, and the 'what not to do' sections are well done. Should you not have access to the expertise of other cavers, you won't go too wrong following this book—that is, if you can still buy the equipment in Australia. Many of the devices described are no longer sold here.

On Rope may not tell you about the simplest, most modern and sophisticated prusik rig and rigging techniques to use, but it might prevent a nasty accident. At \$34.95 it might just be the cheapest insurance policy a young caver could buy.

Stephen Bunton

Caving Practice and Equipment edited by David Judson (David & Charles, 1984, RRP \$49.95. Distributed by Outdoor Agencies).

This is an excellent book in every respect. In fact, it puts *On Rope* to shame. In just two, short, well-written chapters, *Caving Practice and Equipment* outlines modern single-rope technique more simply and comprehensively than any other book on the subject. SRT, however, is just one aspect of caving and therefore only constitutes a small proportion of the book's content. There are chapters on clothing and personal equipment, ladders and life-lines, cave diving, food, expedition logistics, conservation, cave formation and exploration, surveying and photography. Each of these chapters is by a recognized expert in the particular field, and David Judson, who is himself a well respected figure in the British Cave Research Association, has cleverly edited the text into a consistent style—not an easy task.

Caving Practice and Technique takes the reader from the basic, fundamental concerns of the novice ('Which light to choose?') through to the sophistication of the expert ('How do I rig this pitch to avoid shock-loading static ropes?'). It has something to offer all cavers. The book is concise—only 238 pages—but does not compromise in its depth of treatment. Its task is helped by over 200 superb illustrations and plenty of statistics, which cover aspects such as cave accidents and rescues. There are appendices containing information mostly of value to British cavers, at whom it is aimed. The text is enlivened with many high-quality black-and-white photos.

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Reviews

The explanation of how the photos were taken may remove some of the mystery from cave photography, but underlines the author's knowledge and attention to detail. In fact, that comment summarizes the essence of the book. *Caving Practice and Equipment* clearly informs the reader about what cavers do and how they do it, and does so extremely thoroughly.

SB

Skene South, Skene North, Buller South, Buller North, Tali Karrng double-format 1 : 25,000 (Vicmap, 1988, RRP \$7.50 each).

The *Skene* and *Buller* sheets map the area between Mt Skene (Victoria) in the south to Mt Buller in the north, including the Bluff, Mt McDonald, and sections of the Alpine Walking Track. The *Tali Karrng* map is of great value to walkers, covering the area between Mt Wellington and the Tamboritha Road, including the whole of the Wellington River valley upstream from Crows Gorge. The maps are printed in full colour and are clearly presented; they are ideal for bushwalkers.

GvdK

The Pure Land: A Celebration of Wild Places by John Beatty (Thames and Hudson, 1988, RRP \$42.95).

A celebrated UK wilderness and climbing photographer, John Beatty will be little known to Australians who are not aficionados of British walking and climbing periodicals.

A Pure Land is a collection of Beatty's photos, taken almost entirely in Northern hemisphere locations and mostly of walkers and climbers. Many inclusions, such as the Grand Canyon, Greenland, the Scottish Highlands in winter and rockclimbing on English limestone are popular photographic subjects. Consequently many of the photos have a feeling of *déjà vu*, if not tiredness, about them. In others, the figures in the photos look awkward and out of place. A few, however, such as that of the moon over Malham Moor and one of a gannet in flight, are memorable.

It's a fine collection, but Australian wilderness photographers can hold their heads high.

CB

Tales From the Australian Mountains by Niall Brennan (Platypress, revised edition 1988, RRP \$9.95).

This Australian bush classic is likely to prove as popular with contemporary bushwalkers and other bush lovers—particularly those interested in the Victorian Alps—as it was when it first appeared in 1979.

An accomplished and widely published writer, Brennan was actively involved in the Melbourne University Mountaineering Club.

CB

The Voyage of the Great Southern Ark by Reg and Maggy Morrison (Lansdowne, 1988, RRP \$59.95).

The debate about the significance of our tropical rain forest has done a great deal to foster Australia's self-awareness. Only 20 years ago it was suggested that our tropical flora was not a offshoot from south-east Asia but the last remnants of a forest type carried

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GREENPEACE

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The international environmental organization, GREENPEACE, is looking for volunteers for the positions outlined below for the 1989/90 Over-wintering Team at the Greenpeace World Park Base in Antarctica.

BASE LEADER

Must be skilled in mountaineering and have sea-ice travel experience. Has preferably worked in polar climates and been in isolation leading small groups under adverse conditions. The Base Leader will be responsible for all activities at the base, including field trips and will be the chief representative of Greenpeace. Responsibilities will include the maintenance and operation of the base machines and systems (some training may be provided).

MEDICAL

DOCTOR/NURSE/PARAMEDIC

Must be experienced in emergency medical procedures and prepared to accept the rigours of isolation and working under extreme conditions. Will be expected to assist the environmental research program and other projects at the base.

RADIO TECHNICIAN

Familiar with maintenance and repair of HF and VHF communications systems. Knowledge and experience with digital computer communications, HF antenna theory, and satellite installation and maintenance is essential. Possession of an amateur radio licence a definite advantage. Some knowledge of alternative energy systems, such as wind and solar energy, is useful. Will also be responsible for base electrical systems.

BIOLOGICAL

SCIENTIST/TECHNICIAN

Will continue the existing environmental pollution monitoring program. Other projects will involve studies of fish and other marine life during the winter darkness and observations of seasonal variations in nearby freshwater lakes. Knowledge and extensive field experience in pollution or environmental studies, especially in polar regions, is essential.

All applicants: Conversant in English and other languages useful. Previous Antarctic experience highly desirable. Mountaineering/cold weather/polar experience or previous experience with isolation in small groups helpful. Health must be excellent. Commitment will be required from September 1989 through March 1991. Specialized training will be provided as required, including survival training for the Antarctic.

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intact from Gondwanaland. This book celebrates that voyage, and the heritage for which we are responsible, in a series of remarkable photographs accompanied by thoroughly researched and up-to-date text.

It is easy to be blasé about photographs as the technology for their reproduction and the high quality equipment with which to take them becomes more readily available, but those in this book really are something special. Partly it is technique and exotic lenses, but much is the informed choice of subject. The twists of the ancient sedimentary strata, the vast salty horizons of the interior or the twitching snout of an antechinus are imbued with a significance which would be missed by casual observation. This is an expensive book, but one which gives a genuinely original view of this old land and a desire to know it as intimately as the Morrisons obviously do.

Stephen Garnett

Wild Food Plants by Tim Low (Angus & Robertson, 1988, RRP \$39.95).

A few years ago, Tim Low wrote a book about edible exotic weeds. This, its successor, is devoted to native food plants. Judging from the descriptions of most of the 150 species included, I think living off the land has become both easier and more palatable since weeds became available, for all their aesthetic disadvantages.

The main problem seems to be lack of staples. Orchid and lily tubers offer very little reward, in terms of either taste or quantity, for the digging necessary to find them. Australian grass seeds need almost as much energy to collect as they provide when eaten. Reading this book, one can only admire the expertise of the Aboriginal people who managed to live in such a gastronomically austere environment and understand why only one Australian species, the macadamia, has entered international cuisine.

This is a good book: plants are easy to identify from the photographs and text, and the descriptions of edibility are honest. Terms such as astringent, distasteful, sour or disgusting are frequent but there are some species which are exquisite or delightful, and would be worth searching for. Certainly a rigorously indigenous diet would provide new experiences for the tongue and stomach.

SG

Other Titles Received

Alan Rouse: A Mountaineer's Life edited by Geoff Birtles (Allen & Unwin, paperback edition 1988, RRP \$16.95).

Dolomites: Selected Climbs by Ron James (Alpine Club, 1988).

Papua New Guinea—A Travel Survival Kit by Tony Wheeler (Lonely Planet, fourth edition 1988, RRP \$15.95).

Solomon Islands—A Travel Survival Kit by David Harcombe (Lonely Planet, 1988, RRP \$12.95).

Tahiti & French Polynesia—A Travel Survival Kit by Robert Kay (Lonely Planet, second edition 1988, RRP \$12.95).

West Africa—A Travel Survival Kit by Alex Newton (Lonely Planet, 1988, RRP \$12.95).

Publications for possible review are welcome. Send them to the Editor, Wild, PO Box 415, Prahran, Victoria 3181.

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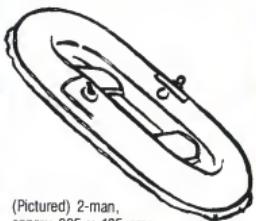
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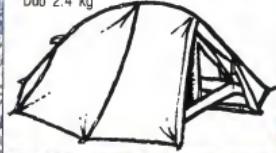
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Give Him Enough Rope ...

Editors, Gary Higgins, property owners, builders, yuppies, police, etc, etc, etc draw judgement from above

I must point out that although 'Taking the Dog for a Walk' (*Wild* no 30) is credited to my initials, the version presented is *Wild* magazine's tamed down one, hacked and altered from almost double its length, the final version printed without my consent. Its editor has failed to make clear if this is pandering to its readership, insulting their intelligence, putting sugar with their medicine, or merely wholesale censorship of ideas contrary to his own. It seems that *Wild* magazine is at the forefront of the 'outdoor establishment'. Despite this I am drawn into the open by the letter of Gary Higgins (*Wild* no 31), to answer its clumsy critique.

Firstly his argument that I have endangered myself. So what. The only life you have the right to take in this world is your own. And the right to take risks is central to many sports and occupations, indeed provides much of the enjoyment in life. We took every precaution, were equipped for abseiling off, and shared equal responsibility for our safety. There was no 'disregard for the serious consequences'. The article too, presented no illusion as to the danger of plummeting 56 stories to the ground, so I do not believe it would encourage any emulation from a largely nonclimbing readership, but would rather urge safety to those who would try it anyway.

We endangered no other people—there was noone even in the remote vicinity. If paid personnel were endangered recovering our flag, it was their own choice.

Secondly it is of no consequence that I have 'committed a wilful trespass on the Rialto property', since I hold that property is theft, and the law brought into question is another person's law, not my own. Whoever puts his hands on me to govern me is a tyrant and usurper, and I consider him my enemy. They never asked me if they could build the huge monstrosity on my skyline. We left the building completely intact, barely scraping the surface of anodised aluminium. We were prepared to polish it again ourselves if requested, and noone ever asked us to leave.

Thirdly, if the article 'flies in the face of respect and safety', it is only the safety of an ailing established system and its thuggish enforcement which lies in doubt. I still at least respect another's freedom. Gary Higgins implores one to join him 'in denouncing this act of gross stupidity', trying to unite concealed yuppies to vent their own narrowminded disrespect. If the act 'defies rational explanation', it is because his futile need to rationalize everything is this time flaunted by the prejudicial tools of cloistered logic.

Fourthly to anyone else who has climbed the building, good one.

Lastly the only respect I hold for police is in their ability to make life difficult, hence my 'veil of anonymity', albeit furthered by Higgins's misquoted initials. The time has come to be forward, as one of the opposition has revealed himself. Catch me if you can.

Simon Vallings

Contributions to Wild are published—and paid for—on the written understanding that they are subject to editing. (We are not aware of any professional publication that would print submissions without review.) As with all articles appearing in Wild, Simon Vallings's story was first edited by an independent, professional free-lance editor who initiated the changes that have so roused him. I concurred with these suggestions on the basis of standard grammar and readability. Judge for yourselves from Vallings's unedited letter above whether the magazine would have been enhanced by the inclusion of his type of expression and comment editor.

A Barrow to Push?

...As a personal foundation subscriber to your magazine, be assured of my enjoyment of its content since the first issue, and in particular the points of view and the positions you have taken through your Editorial over recent years... I seek only to address the question of insurance and in no way to take issue with any aspect of the substance of your Editorial (in *Wild* no 30)...

The ability of the insurance industry to meet the needs of the outdoor sector was the subject of a gathering some five years ago that resulted in the establishment of the International Adventure Travel Operators Collective...

(The IATOC provides) affordable public liability insurance to any well-managed commercial or non-profit organization... (and has) standards for guiding skills and management operations...

It will never be the intention of the IATOC to require a 'bushwalking licence'; however we are certainly in the business of sustaining standards for those who wish to purchase our insurance.

Robert Owen

Robert Barrow (NSW) Pty Ltd
North Sydney, NSW

Join the Club

Dammit! Just when I was about to start on my latest power kick, the Abseilers and Pruskers Coalition, someone else is getting in on the act and suggesting an alternative association. I had it all planned. It looked beautiful. By calling in mates from one of the insurance companies, we could get sponsorship and then become the national body...

We had it all worked out. We'd run accreditation courses at various levels. We could have had Assistant Instructor, Instructor, Senior Instructor, and finally the Instructor Diplomate. All of which would require a live-in assessment course, a week's training course, a year's probation during which aspirants would have to do voluntary work for us, and finally a one-week assessment. Just to prove that we're up with the times, all our affiliates would have had to reaccredit themselves every three years. What with training fees, membership fees, live-in courses, licenses

and in-service training, we on the committee could probably have retired...

Never mind, if I can't get this one off the ground, I've got an idea for a National Snow-shoeing Association.

Geza Kovacs
Bogong, Vic

Playing it Safe

Regarding your Editorial 'An Unholy Alliance' (*Wild* no 30), I take your point on some of the issues raised, especially regarding the increased propensity for organizations (educational and commercial) to seek, and individuals to provide, certificates of 'proof' of competency in outdoor adventure pursuits. Experience doesn't seem sufficient any more... However, I doubt that these qualifications are undertaken by people 'with dollar signs in their eyes'; there doesn't seem to be a great deal of money to be made by instructors in the commercial adventure field.

I can understand *Wild* becoming upset at bureaucratic attempts to restrict experienced adventurers, especially rockclimbers (see also Editorials in issues 17, 19 and 23), and adults who are prepared to put themselves at risk for the thrill of high adventure. But you do not differentiate between these groups and school-age students, for whom outdoor educators are responsible.

You cite the fear of litigation, and you make brief mention of the fact that those involved in teaching adventure pursuits would be concerned. Of course this is an issue, but it is clutched at most fervently by education authorities and school administrations, not the outdoor educators themselves...

You mention 'the sacred cow of safety... One outdoor education text refers to 'an approach towards safety rather than a prescriptive and often excessively restrictive set of rules'. Perhaps this is what some of your advertisers mean by the term. One of them offers rockclimbing instruction: 'Learn to climb in complete safety under the close supervision of experienced, friendly instructors'. (*This working no longer appears*. Editor) Perhaps *Wild* should be seen as being consistent and refuse to accept such advertisements.

Later you bemoan the lack of colour, resourcefulness, sense of adventure and individuality in current participants in outdoor adventure activities; but surely it is *Wild* which has helped to create this scenario, with its track notes, surveys, etc...

The issue of qualifications and safety measures in outdoor education is too large to be handled in a one-page editorial; perhaps *Wild* could be used as a forum to debate the issues further. Perhaps that was the point of the Editorial after all?

Duncan Buchanan
Plumpton Park, SA

Readers' letters are welcome. A selection will be published in this column. Letters of less than 200 words are more likely to be printed. Write to the Editor, Wild, PO Box 415, Prahran, Victoria 3181.



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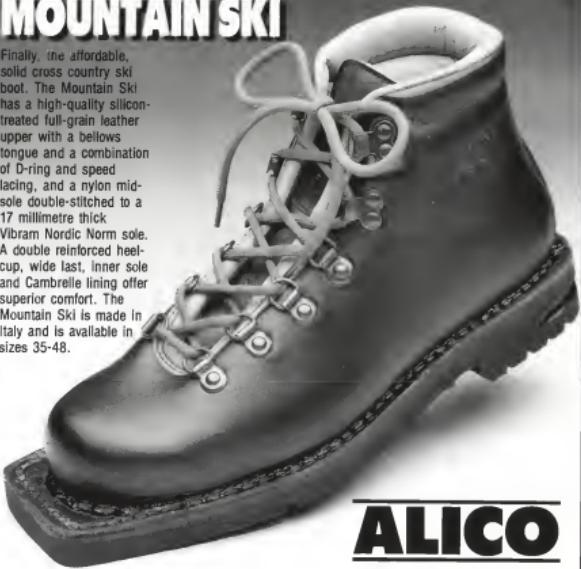
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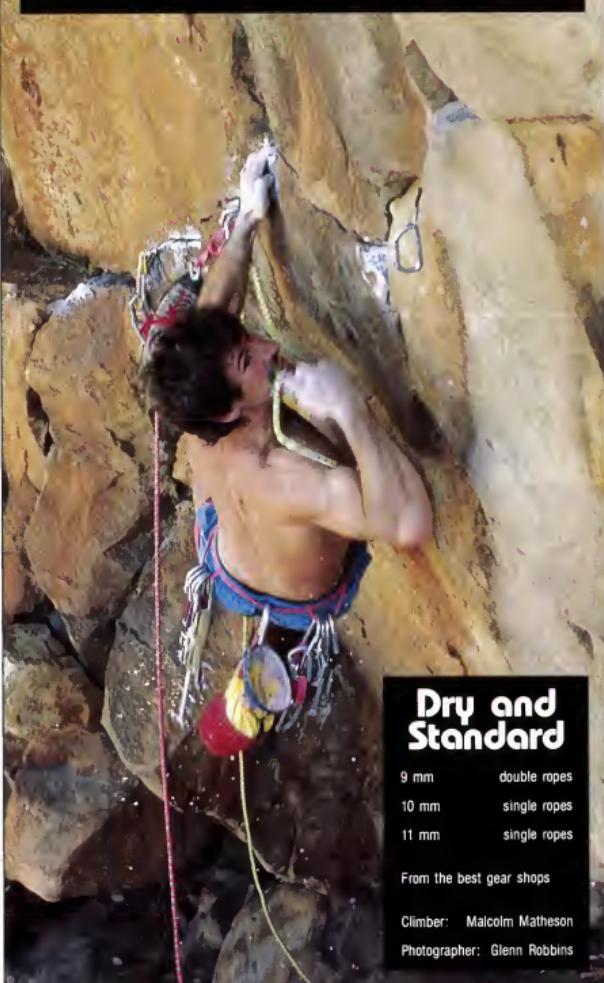
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'89 INTRODUCTIONS

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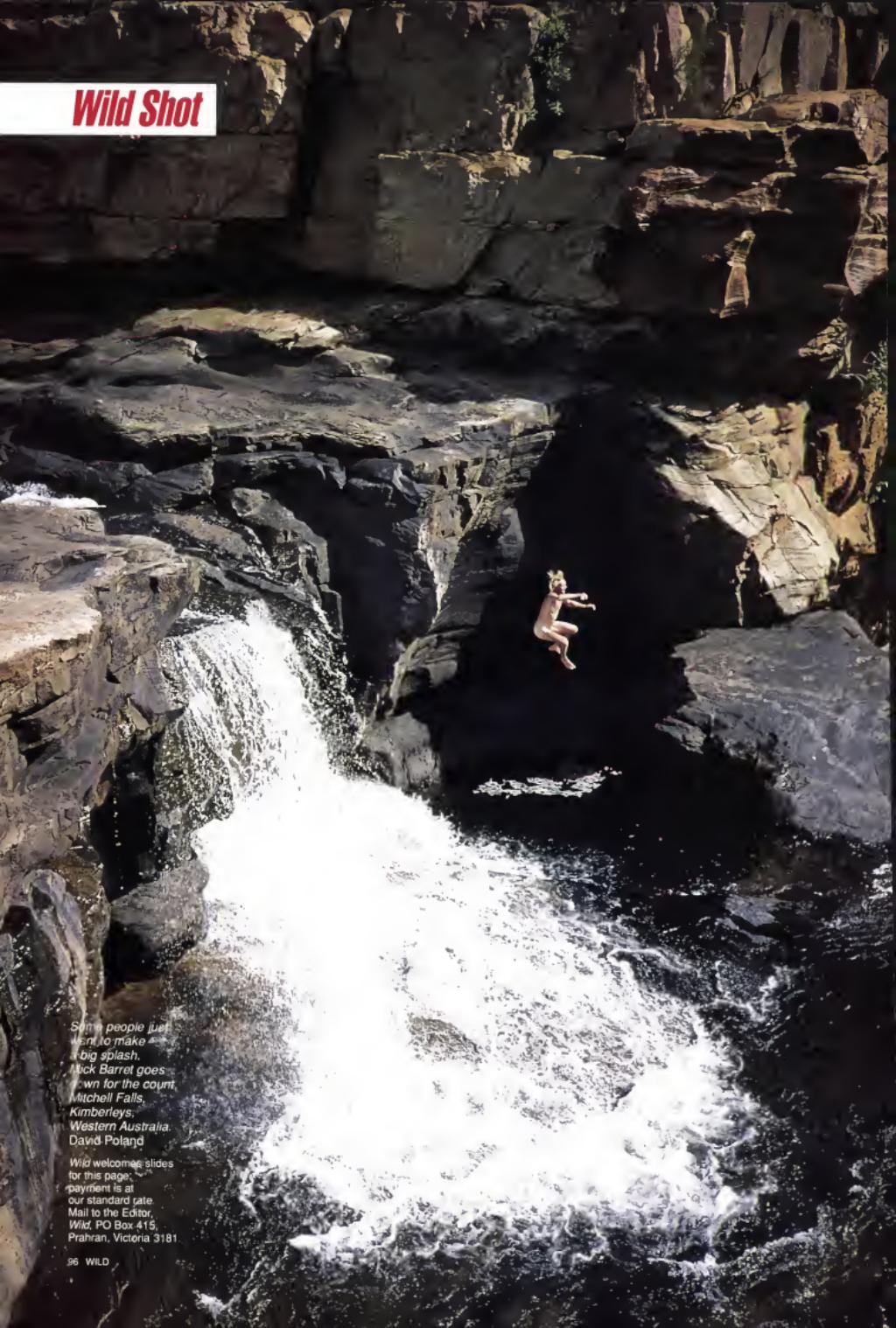
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Rock Editor, Chris Baxter, after completing a new route on the South Peak of Mt Geryon, Tasmania, 1989.

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